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# 15 Protection and support services

Protection and support services aim to assist individuals and families who are in crisis or experiencing difficulties that hinder personal or family functioning. They do this by alleviating the difficulties and reducing the potential for their recurrence.

This chapter reports on:

- *child protection services*: the functions of government that receive and assess allegations of child abuse and neglect, and/or harm to children and young people, that provide and refer clients to family support and other relevant services, and that intervene to protect children;
- *out-of-home care services*: care for children placed away from their parents for protective or other family welfare reasons; and
- *supported accommodation and assistance services*: services to assist young people, adults and families who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

A profile of child protection and out-of-home care services appears in section 15.1, followed by a brief discussion of recent policy developments in section 15.2. A framework of performance indicators is outlined in section 15.3 and data are discussed in section 15.4. Future directions in performance reporting are outlined in section 15.5.

A profile of accommodation and assistance services funded under the Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP) appears in section 15.6, followed by a brief discussion of recent policy developments in section 15.7. A framework of performance indicators for these services is outlined in section 15.8 and data are discussed in section 15.9. Future directions in performance reporting are discussed in section 15.10.

Jurisdictions' comments on both child protection and out-of-home care services, and supported accommodation and assistance services are reported in section 15.11. Definitions of data descriptors and indicators are provided in section 15.12.

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### *Supporting tables*

Supporting tables for chapter 15 are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report. The files are provided in Microsoft Excel 97 format as \Publications\Reports\2003\Attach15A.xls and in Adobe PDF format as \Publications\Reports\2003\Attach15A.pdf.

Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 15A.3 is table 5 in the electronic files). These files can be found on the Review web page ([www.pc.gov.au/service/gsp](http://www.pc.gov.au/service/gsp)). Users without Internet access can contact the Secretariat to obtain these tables (see details on the inside front cover of the Report).

## **15.1 Profile of child protection and out-of-home care services**

### **Service overview**

#### *Child protection services*

Child protection services are provided to protect children and/or young people aged 0–17 years who are at risk of harm within their families, or whose families do not have the capacity to protect them. These services include:

- receiving and responding to reports of concern about children or young people, including investigation and assessment where appropriate;
- providing support services (directly or through referral) where harm or a risk of significant harm is identified, to strengthen the capacity of families to care safely for children;
- initiating intervention where necessary, including applying for a care and protection order through a court and, in some situations, placing children or young people in out-of-home care to secure their safety;
- ensuring the ongoing safety of children and young people by working with families to resolve protective concerns;
- working with families to reunite children (who were removed for safety reasons) with their parents as soon as possible; and
- securing permanent alternative care when it is determined that a child is unable to be returned to the care of their parents, and working with young people to

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identify alternative supported living arrangements where family reunification is not possible. (In NSW, restoration may occur in voluntary placements as well.)

Certain social and demographic factors are associated with involvement in the child protection system (box 15.1).

**Box 15.1 Current research in child protection**

During 2001-02, the Department of Human Services in Victoria undertook detailed research and analysis of its child protection system as outlined in the report *An Integrated Strategy for Child Protection and Placement Services* (DHS 2002). This analysis was undertaken partly as a response to rising rates of both notifications and renotifications of child abuse and neglect.

The report looked at the characteristics of children and families involved in the child protection system. Some of the findings were that:

- more than 75 per cent of families investigated for suspected child abuse were on pensions, benefits or low incomes, and 45 per cent were sole parent families;
- around one-third of parents had problems with alcohol abuse, one-third had substance abuse problems, 19 per cent had a psychiatric disability and more than half had experienced family violence. All of these factors, including the presence of more than one of these factors, have increased over the past five years;
- the proportion of renotifications of child abuse and neglect rose from 36 per cent of all notifications in 1993-94 to 61 per cent of notifications in 2000-01;
- there was evidence of an increase in the incidence of child abuse and neglect in the Indigenous community, with the number of substantiations for Indigenous children increasing by 88 per cent between 1995-96 and 2000-01; and
- a number of families were offered only limited assistance by child protection, and many families had chronic problems that were not addressed through their involvement in the child protection system.

The report concluded that demand for child protection and placement services in Victoria could be more effectively managed and, in the longer term reduced. The report sought to identify better responses to the often complex and chronic problems experienced by some families and to allow intervention earlier to prevent child abuse and neglect occurring. It proposed an integrated strategy to improve child protection practice in Victoria.

*Source:* Department of Human Services (DHS) (2002).

*Out-of-home care services*

Out-of-home care services provide care for children and young people aged 0–17 years who are placed away from their parents or family home for reasons of

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safety or family crisis. These reasons include abuse, neglect or harm, illness of a parent and the inability of parents to provide adequate care. The placements may be voluntary or in conjunction with care and protection orders.

### **Box 15.2 Intensive family support services**

Intensive family support services are specialist services established in each jurisdiction that aim to:

- prevent the imminent separation of children from their primary caregivers as a result of child protection concerns; or
- reunify families where separation has already occurred.

In 2001-02, at least 56 intensive family support programs and sub programs were operating across Australia (two in NSW, 36 in Victoria, three in Queensland, three in WA, nine in SA, one in Tasmania and two in the ACT). The NT do not fund any intensive family support services.

Intensive family support services differ from other types of child protection and family support services referred to in this chapter, in that they:

- are funded or established explicitly to prevent the separation of, or to reunify, families;
- provide a range of services as part of an integrated strategy focusing on improving family functioning and skills, rather than providing a single type of service;
- are intensive in nature, averaging at least four hours of service provision per week for a specified short term period (usually less than six months); and
- generally receive referrals from a child protection service.

Intensive family support services may use some or all of the following strategies: assessment and case planning; parent education and skill development; individual and family counselling; anger management; respite and emergency care; practical and financial support; mediation, brokerage and referral services; and problem solving training.

Expenditure data indicate that recurrent expenditure on intensive family support services across all jurisdictions in 2001-02 was at least \$46.2 million (table 15A.1). Table 15A.21 provides additional information about families and children who were involved with family preservation services during 2001-02.

*Source:* Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (unpublished).

Out-of-home care services are either home-based care (such as foster care, care with the child's extended family and other home-based arrangements), facility-based care (such as family group homes and community residential care), or independent living (which is often intensively supported) as a transition to full independence or supported placements. Across jurisdictions, there has been a shift away from the use

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of facility-based (or residential) care towards foster care and other forms of home-based care, including relative/kinship care. Intensive family support services are increasingly seen as an alternative to the removal of the child from their home for child protection reasons (box 15.2).

## **Roles and responsibilities**

State and Territory governments fund child protection, out-of-home care, family preservation and other relevant services that may be delivered by the government or the non-government sector. State and Territory community services departments are responsible for investigating and assessing reports to the department, referring families to support services and intervening where necessary (including making court applications when an order is required to protect a child and placing children in out-of-home care). The non-government sector plays a significant role in the delivery of family support services in all jurisdictions.

Other areas of government also have a role in child protection and provide services for children who have come into contact with community services departments for protective reasons. Examples include:

- police services, which investigate serious allegations of child abuse and neglect, particularly criminal matters;
- courts, which decide whether a child will be placed on an order;
- education and child care services, which provide services for these children and also conduct mandatory reporting and protective behaviours education in some jurisdictions; and
- health services, which support the assessment of child protection matters and deliver therapeutic, counselling and other services.

## **Size and scope**

### *The child protection system*

Child protection legislation, policies and practices vary among jurisdictions, but the broad processes in the child protection system are similar (figure 15.1).<sup>1</sup> State and

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<sup>1</sup> Child protection services, care and protection orders and out-of-home care relate to children aged 0–17 years. Rates of children in notifications, investigations and substantiations, however, are calculated for children aged 0–16 years, given differences in jurisdictions' legislation, policies and practices regarding children aged 17 years.

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Territory community services departments are advised of concerns about the wellbeing of children through reports to the department. Reports may be made by people mandated to report (such as medical practitioners, police services, and school teachers and principals) or by other members of the community. These reports are then assessed and classified as child protection notifications, child concern reports or matters requiring some other kind of response. The most common sources of notification for finalised investigations in 2001-02 were school personnel (17 per cent), police (17 per cent), parents and guardians (12 per cent), and friends and neighbours (10 per cent) (AIHW 2002).

Jurisdictions count notifications at different points in the response to a report, ranging from the point of initial contact with the source of the report to the end of a screening and decision making process. This means the number of notifications is not strictly comparable across jurisdictions.

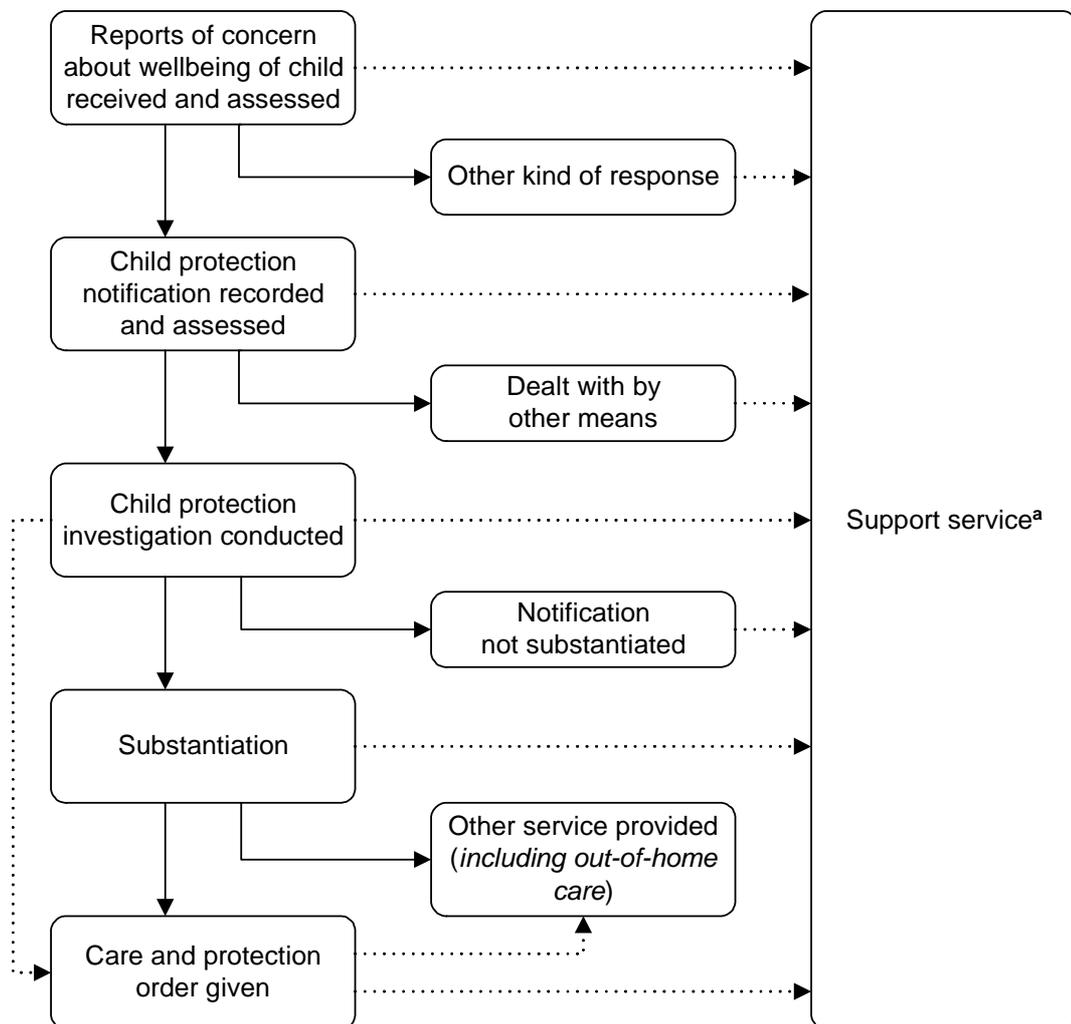
### *Notification*

All jurisdictions, apart from Victoria and the NT, screen each incoming report before deciding whether it will be designated and counted as a notification, thus reducing the proportion of reports that become notifications. WA and Tasmania undertake a further screening process, designed to differentiate between concerns relating to child protection and family support/other matters, which further reduces the number of notifications. For WA and Tasmania therefore, only 'child harm/maltreatment' notifications are the subject of this Report.

In all jurisdictions, notifications are investigated when deemed appropriate, based on the policies and practices in that jurisdiction. Once it has been decided that an investigation is required, the investigation process is similar across jurisdictions. The community services department obtains further information about the child and their family by checking information systems for any previous history, undertaking discussion/case planning with agencies and individuals, interviewing/sighting the child and/or interviewing the caregivers/parents. At a minimum, the child is sighted whenever practicable, and the child's circumstances and needs are assessed. This investigation process will determine whether the notification is substantiated or not substantiated (figure 15.1).

Although notifications are defined differently across jurisdictions, around 99 524 children were the subject of child protection notifications in 2001-02. Nationally in 2001-02, the rate of notifications per 1000 children in the population aged 0-16 years was 22.3. Across jurisdictions, the rate was highest in Victoria (25.9) and lowest in Tasmania (4.0) (table 15A.8).

Figure 15.1 Child protection system



Note: Dashed lines indicate that clients may or may not receive these services, depending on need.

<sup>a</sup> Support services include family support or family preservation services provided by community service departments and referrals to other agencies.

### Indigenous children

Nationally, 9421 Indigenous children and 90 103 non-Indigenous children were the subject of child protection notifications in 2001-02. The rate of notifications per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 51.6 for Indigenous children and 21.1 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.8).

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### *Substantiation*

The criteria for substantiation vary across jurisdictions. In some jurisdictions, a notification is substantiated when an incident of abuse or neglect has occurred or is likely to occur; in others, it is substantiated when the child has been harmed or is likely to be harmed, or when there is a combination of action and harm.<sup>2</sup>

If an investigation results in substantiation, then intervention by the relevant community services department may be needed to protect the child. This intervention can take a number of forms, including referral to other services, supervision, counselling or recourse to the court, or placement in out-of-home care.

Across Australia in 2001-02, 25 313 children were the subject of a substantiation. The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 5.7. Across jurisdictions, this ranged from 8.3 per 1000 in Queensland to 1.4 per 1000 in Tasmania (table 15A.8).

### *Indigenous children*

Nationally in 2001-02, 3254 Indigenous children and 22 059 non-Indigenous children were the subject of a substantiation. The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children in the population aged 0–16 years was 17.8 for Indigenous children and 5.2 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.8).

### *Care and protection orders*

Although child protection substantiations are often resolved without the need for a court order (which is usually a last resort), recourse to the court may take place at any point in the child protection investigation process (figure 15.1). The types of order available vary across jurisdictions.

Across Australia, 20 557 children were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2002. The rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 4.3. Across jurisdictions, this ranged from 5.1 per 1000 in NSW to 2.8 per 1000 in WA (table 15A.8).

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<sup>2</sup> In the past child protection legislation and policy focused on the identification and investigation of narrowly defined incidents that were broadly grouped as types of abuse or neglect. Across all jurisdictions, the focus is shifting away from the actions of parents and guardians, towards the outcomes for the child, and the identification and investigation of actual harm to the child and the child's needs.

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### *Indigenous children*

Nationally, 4264 Indigenous children and 16 293 non-Indigenous children were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2002. The rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 22.1 for Indigenous children and 3.6 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.8).

### *Out-of-home care*

Out-of-home care is one of a range of services provided to families and children where there is a need to provide safe care for a child. The current emphasis in policy and practice is to maintain the child within the family if at all possible, and to place a child in out-of-home care only if this will improve the outcome for the child. If it is necessary to remove the child from their home, then placement with the wider family or community is sought where possible, particularly in the case of Indigenous children (AIHW 1999). Continued emphasis is being placed on improving case planning and case management processes, to facilitate the safe return home of children in out-of-home care and to maximise case workers' contact time with children and families.

Across Australia, 18 880 children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2002. The rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 4.0. Across jurisdictions, this ranged from 5.0 per 1000 in NSW to 2.7 per 1000 in the NT (table 15A.11).

### *Indigenous children*

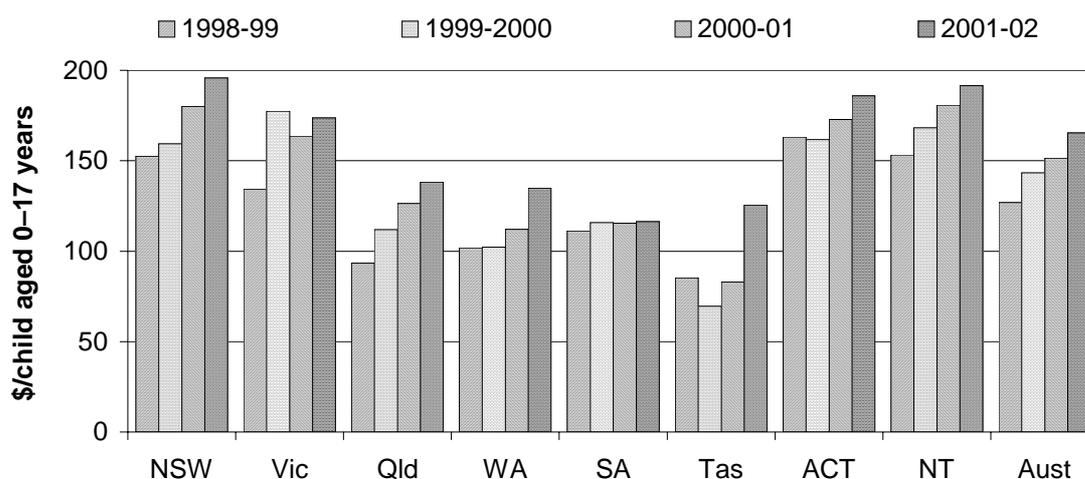
Nationally, 4199 Indigenous children and 14 681 non-Indigenous children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2002. The rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 21.7 for Indigenous children and 3.2 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.11).

## **Funding**

Recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services was at least \$796.6 million across Australia in 2001-02 — a real increase of \$80.1 million (or 11.2 per cent) from the 2000-01 expenditure. Nationally, out-of-home care services accounted for the majority (60.2 per cent, or \$479.4 million) of this expenditure. Some jurisdictions, however, have difficulty in separating expenditure on child protection from expenditure on out-of-home care services (table 15A.1).

Nationally, real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years was about \$165 in 2001-02. This varied across jurisdictions, from \$196 in NSW to \$116 in SA (figure 15.2). Real recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services per child aged 0–17 years increased in all jurisdictions between 2000-01 and 2001-02.

**Figure 15.2 Real recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services (2001-02 dollars)**



Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.1.

It is an objective of the Review to report comparable estimates of costs. Ideally, the full range of costs to government would be determined on a comparable basis across jurisdictions. Where the full costs cannot be counted, costs should be estimated on a consistent basis across jurisdictions. In the area of child protection, however, there are differences across jurisdictions in the costs reported. (Table 15A.4 identifies the level of consistency across jurisdictions for a number of expenditure items.) The scope of child protection systems also varies across jurisdictions, and expenditure on some services may be included for some jurisdictions and not for others (see page 15.6 for a discussion of the child protection system).

## 15.2 Policy developments in child protection and out-of-home care services

Most jurisdictions are implementing child protection reforms — including the introduction of new legislation — to enhance the safety of children and ensure children and families receive the types of service most likely to meet their needs.

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In NSW, legislation that was partially proclaimed in December 2000 provides staff with greater flexibility in responding to a report of child abuse. It also shifts the focus to the children and young people most at risk, and emphasises a search for early solutions through cooperation between the Government and community agencies. The remaining sections of the NSW legislation are yet to be proclaimed.

During 2001-02, Victoria completed a wide-ranging examination of child protection and support services which resulted in the report *An Integrated Strategy for Child Protection and Placement Services*. The report recommended approaches to highlight strengthened prevention and early intervention services, as well as a range of improved service responses for children and young people who are more deeply involved in the protection and placement system. Further details, and other significant policy initiatives for 2001-02 are outlined on Victoria's jurisdictional page.

Queensland's reform of child protection service delivery — commencing in 2000 with the proclamation of the *Child Protection Act 1999* and the implementation of responses to the Forde Inquiry recommendations — has continued. Further policy development and implementation has involved: licensing of care services to ensure the quality of care provided to children and young people in care meets legislated standards; addressing standard of care issues by training staff and community stakeholders involved in assessing such issues, and establishing a formal client complaint mechanism to respond and monitor complaints about services delivered directly to departmental clients.

In WA, the Department for Community Development was established in 2001-02, with the objective of engaging all Western Australians in strengthening and developing their communities. The key principles of inclusiveness, engagement, capacity building and coordination will be applied to build partnerships between service providers and communities, to enhance the delivery of child protection and out-of-home care services.

In SA, a major review on the provision of alternative care services has been completed, and a steering group representing alternative care peak bodies, government and non-government organisations has been appointed to implement recommendations.

In Tasmania, the implementation of the *Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997* has resulted in greater emphasis on child and family services. The emphasis is on holistic services that aim to support families to keep children and young people safe within their families. Where this aim is not possible to achieve, the objective is to support the community to promote the best possible future for children and young people in out-of-home care services.

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The ACT has had a policy shift — in line with its *Children and Young People Act 1999* — away from substantiating an event or occurrence in a child's life and towards substantiating significant harm to the child. This means that while harm might have occurred, it is necessary before substantiation to establish that the harm has had or will have a significant impact on the development or wellbeing of the child. This may also lead to lower numbers of investigations being substantiated. The Act is being reviewed. Policies and service delivery models are also under review.

### **15.3 Framework of child protection and out-of-home care services performance indicators**

The framework of performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services is based on shared government objectives (box 15.3).

#### **Box 15.3 Objectives for child protection and out-of-home care services**

The aims of child protection services are to:

- protect children and young people at risk of harm within their family or in circumstances in which the family of the child or young person does not have the capacity to protect them; and
- assist families to protect children and young people.

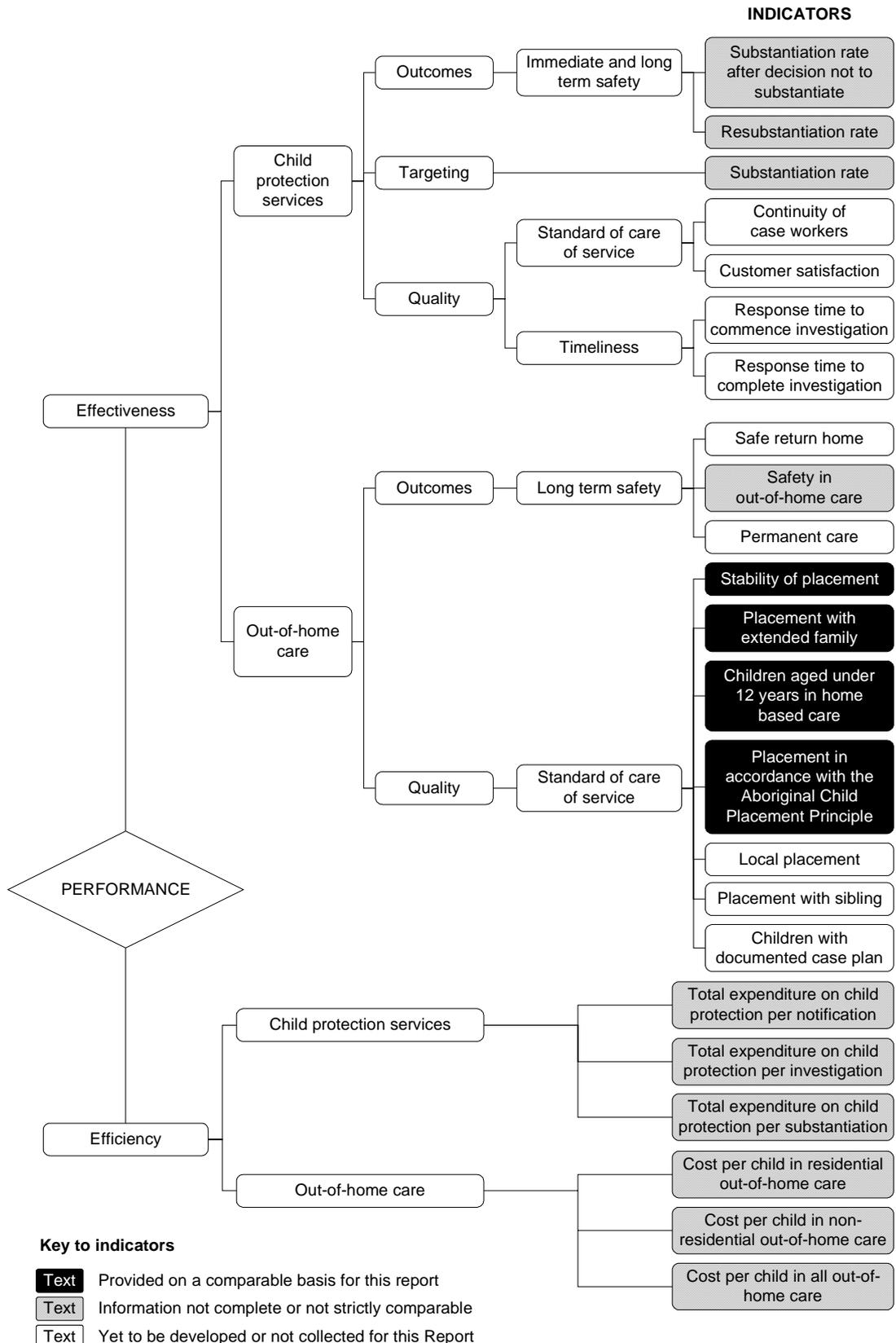
The aim of out-of-home care services is to provide quality care for children and young people aged 17 years and under who cannot live with their parents for reasons of safety or family crisis.

Child protection and out-of-home care services should be provided in an efficient and effective manner.

The goal of child protection is to maintain the child within the family wherever this can be safely achieved. In some situations, however, it may be necessary to place the child in out-of-home care. The framework identifies key result areas that indicate the extent to which these broad objectives are met (figure 15.3).

The performance indicator framework, and those indicators that are comparable in the 2003 Report, are shown in figure 15.3. For data that are not considered strictly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

Figure 15.3 Performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services



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## 15.4 Key child protection and out-of-home care services performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of client may affect the effectiveness and efficiency of child protection services. Appendix A contains detailed statistics which may assist in interpreting the performance indicators.

### Effectiveness: child protection services

#### *Outcomes — resubstantiation rate*

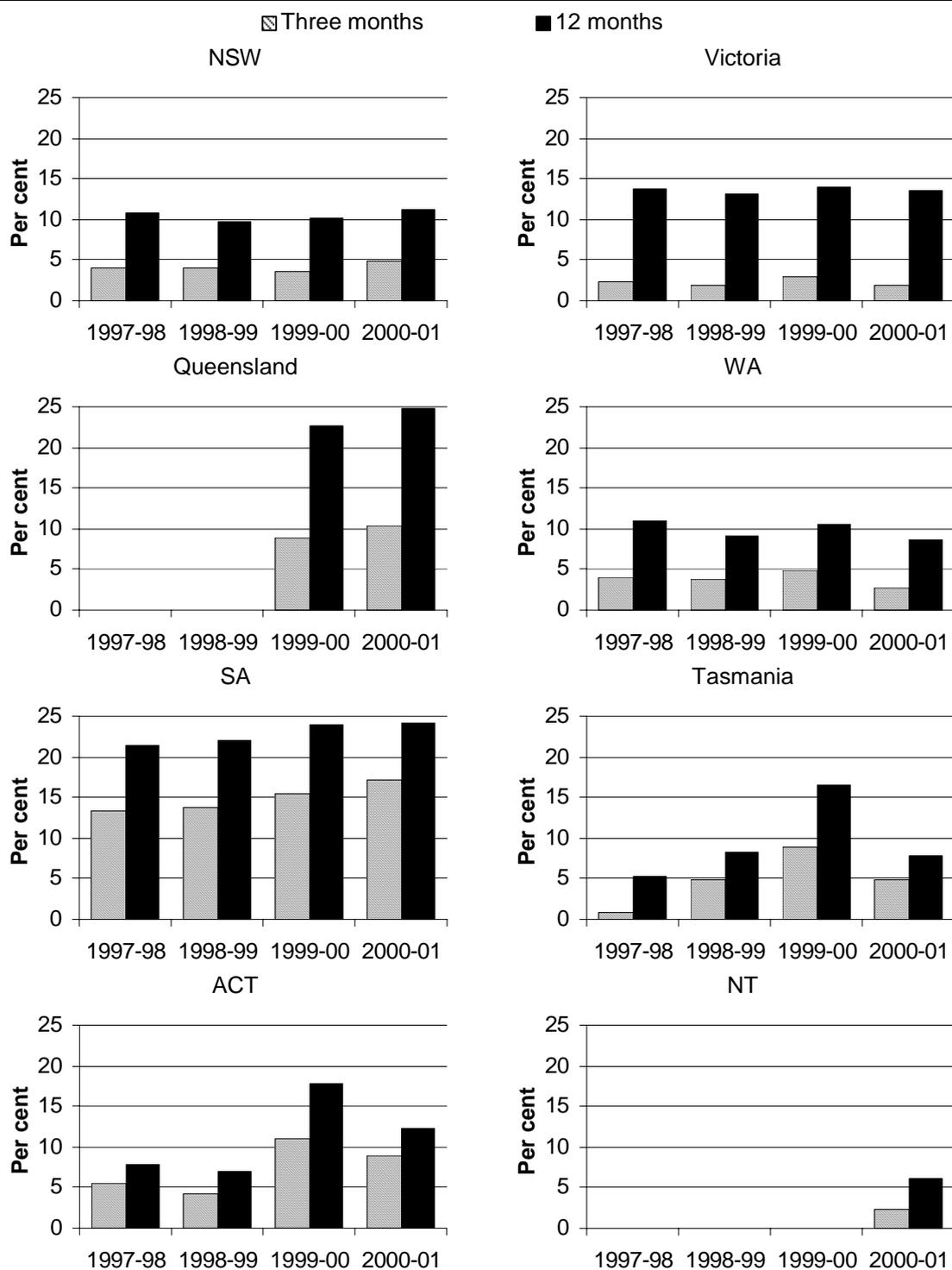
Child protection services aim to prevent the recurrence of abuse and neglect or harm to children. One way of observing whether this is achieved is to measure the number of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation. This indicator of service outcomes is important because it partly reveals the extent to which intervention by child protection services has succeeded in preventing further harm. Reported results, however, may be affected by factors that are beyond the control of child protection services, such as changes in the family situation (for example, illness, unemployment, a new partner).

Resubstantiation is measured by counting the proportion of children who were the subject of a substantiation in the previous financial year (2000-01 for this Report) and who were subsequently the subject of a further substantiation within the following three and/or 12 months.

**Data that are comparable across jurisdictions were not available for this Report**, but data are comparable within each jurisdiction over time (figure 15.4).

- In NSW, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 2000-01 was 4.9 per cent (an increase of 1.3 percentage points from 1999-2000). The proportion who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 11.1 per cent (an increase of 0.9 percentage points from 1999-2000) (table 15A.29).
- In Victoria, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 2000-01 was 1.9 per cent (a decline of 1.0 percentage point from 1999-2000). The proportion who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 13.7 per cent (a decline of 0.3 percentage points from 1999-2000) (table 15A.45).

Figure 15.4 Proportion of children who were the subject of a substantiation during the previous year, who were the subject of a subsequent substantiation within three and 12 months<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates should not be compared across jurisdictions.

Source: AIHW *Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia* data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.29, 15A.45, 15A.61, 15A.77, 15A.93, 15A.109, 15A.125 and 15A.141.

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- In Queensland, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 2000-01 was 10.4 per cent (an increase of 1.4 percentage point from 1999-2000). The proportion who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 24.8 per cent (an increase of 2.2 percentage points from 1999-2000) (table 15A.61).
  - In WA, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 2000-01 was 2.8 per cent (a decline of 2.1 percentage points from 1999-2000). The proportion who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 8.7 per cent (a decline of 1.8 percentage points from 1999-2000) (table 15A.77).
  - In SA, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 2000-01 was 17.2 per cent (an increase of 1.8 percentage points from 1999-2000). The proportion who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 24.2 per cent (an increase of 0.3 percentage points from 1999-2000) (table 15A.93).
  - In Tasmania, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 2000-01 was 5.0 per cent (a decline of 3.9 percentage points from 1999-2000). The proportion who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 7.9 per cent (a decline of 8.6 percentage points from 1999-2000) (table 15A.109).
  - In the ACT, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 2000-01 was 8.9 per cent (a decline of 2.2 percentage points from 1999-2000). The proportion who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 12.3 per cent (a decline of 5.6 percentage points from 1999-2000) (table 15A.125).
  - In the NT, the proportion of children who were the subject of a resubstantiation within three months after an initial substantiation in 2000-01 was 2.4, while the proportion who were the subject of a resubstantiation within 12 months was 6.0 (table 15A.141). The NT was unable to provide data for previous years.

#### *Outcomes — substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate*

This indicator measures the proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation in the previous financial year which led to a decision not to substantiate, who were subsequently the subject of a substantiation within three and 12 months of the initial decision not to substantiate. This indicator is important because it partly reveals the extent to which an investigation has not succeeded in identifying the risk of harm to a child who is subsequently the subject of

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substantiated harm. It should be noted, however, that a demonstrable risk of harm might not have existed in the first instance. As such, reported results may be affected by factors that are beyond the control of child protection services.

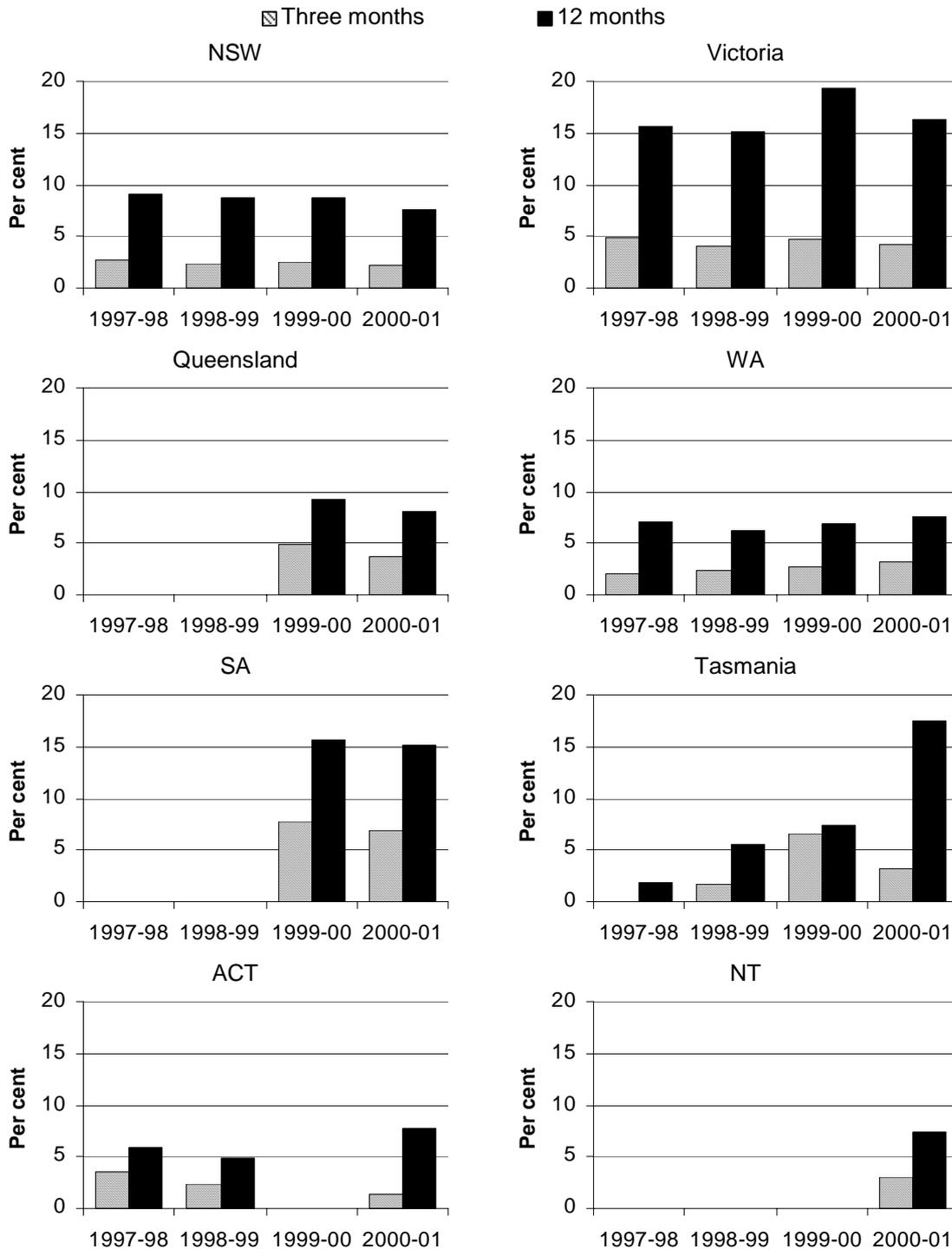
**Data that are comparable across jurisdictions were not available for this Report**, but data are comparable within each jurisdiction over time (figure 15.5).

- In NSW, the proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within three months was 2.1 per cent (a decline of 0.4 percentage points from 1999-2000). The proportion who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within 12 months was 7.6 per cent (a decline of 1.1 percentage points from 1999-2000) (table 15A.28).
- In Victoria, the proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within three months was 4.2 per cent (a decline of 1.5 percentage points from 1999-2000). The proportion who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within 12 months was 16.3 per cent (a decline of 3.0 percentage points from 1999-2000) (table 15A.44).

In Queensland, the proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within three months was 3.8 per cent (a decline of 1.1 percentage points from 1999-2000). The proportion who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within 12 months was 8.0 per cent (a decline of 1.2 percentage points from 1999-2000) (table 15A.60).

- In WA, the proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within three months was 3.2 per cent (an increase of 0.5 percentage points from 1999-2000). The proportion who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within 12 months was 7.5 per cent (an increase of 0.6 percentage points from 1999-2000) (table 15A.76).
- In SA, the proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within three months was 6.9 per cent (a decline of 0.8 percentage points from 1999-2000). The proportion who were the subject a decision not to substantiate 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within 12 months was 15.1 per cent (a decline of 0.6 percentage points from 1999-2000) (table 15A.92).

**Figure 15.5 Proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation and decision not to substantiate in the previous year, who were the subject of a subsequent substantiation within three and/or 12 months<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates should not be compared across jurisdictions.

Source: AIHW *Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia* data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.28, 15A.44, 15A.60, 15A.76, 15A.92, 15A.108, 15A.124 and 15A.140.

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- In Tasmania, the proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within three months was 3.2 per cent (a decline of 3.4 percentage points from 1999-2000). The proportion who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within 12 months was 17.5 per cent (an increase of 10.1 percentage points from 1999-2000) (table 15A.108).
  - In the ACT, the proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within three months was 1.3 per cent. The proportion who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within 12 months was 7.7 per cent (table 15A.124). Data for 1999-2000 were not available for comparison.
  - In the NT, the proportion of children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within three months was 3.0 per cent. The proportion who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate in 2000-01 and then the subject of a substantiation within 12 months was 7.4 per cent (table 15A.140). The NT was unable to provide data for previous years.

### *Targeting — substantiation rate*

Targeting is conceptually difficult to measure. The substantiation rate (the proportion of finalised investigations that result in substantiation) attempts to measure the effectiveness of targeting of investigations, in terms of the human and financial cost of investigation where no harm has occurred. Decisions on targeting must weigh up the investigation costs against the cost of failing to investigate a case where harm has occurred. The substantiation rate provides information on only one aspect of targeting — that is, the proportion of investigations that substantiated harm. It provides no information on cases that were not investigated but for which an investigation would have substantiated harm.

An increase in the substantiation rate may reflect changes in targeting strategies (that is, the same number of investigations with increased targeting of cases where harm has occurred). For example, more narrow targeting (that is, fewer investigations targeted at the highest priority cases). In the case of narrower targeting, the benefits (both human and financial) from fewer investigations need to be weighed against the costs of harm having occurred in the ‘lower risk’ cases (as determined by the assessment process) that were not investigated.

Differences in the substantiation rate across jurisdictions (when comparable data are available) and changes over time within jurisdictions are best used, therefore, to

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prompt further analysis, rather than to be considered as definitive performance information.

**Data that are comparable across jurisdictions were not available for this Report because definitions of substantiation vary across jurisdictions**, but data are comparable within each jurisdiction over time unless otherwise stated (figure 15.6).

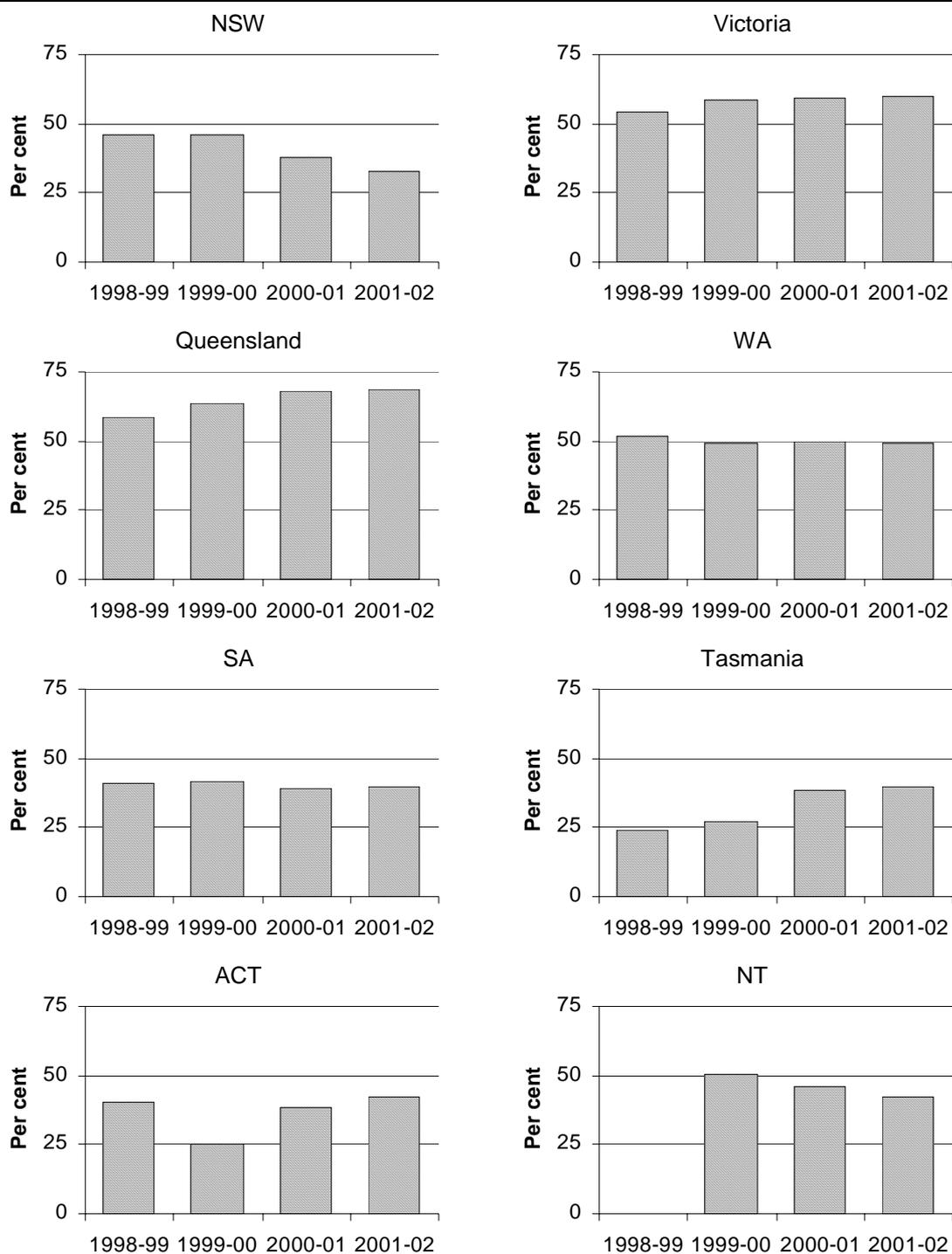
- In NSW, the substantiation rate was 32.8 per cent in 2001-02 — a decline of 4.9 percentage points from 2000-01 (table 15A.24).
- In Victoria, the substantiation rate was 59.7 per cent in 2001-02 — an increase of 0.8 percentage points from 2000-01 (table 15A.40).
- In Queensland, the substantiation rate was 68.6 per cent in 2001-02 — an increase of 0.6 percentage points from 2000-01 (table 15A.56).
- In WA, the substantiation rate was 48.9 per cent in 2001-02 — a decline of 0.9 percentage points from 2000-01 (table 15A.72).
- In SA, the substantiation rate was 39.7 per cent in 2001-02 — an increase of 0.7 percentage points from 2000-01 (table 15A.88).
- In Tasmania, the substantiation rate was 39.9 per cent in 2001-02 — an increase of 1.5 percentage points from 2000-01 (table 15A.104).
- In the ACT, the substantiation rate was 42.1 per cent in 2001-02 — an increase of 3.7 percentage points from 2000-01 (table 15A.120).
- In the NT, the substantiation rate was 42.4 per cent in 2001-02 — a decline of 3.9 percentage points from 2000-01 (table 15A.136).

## **Effectiveness: out-of-home care services**

### *Client outcomes — safety in out-of-home care*

One indicator of the effectiveness of out-of-home care is the safety of clients in care situations. Only Victoria, Queensland, WA, Tasmania and the ACT were able to provide data on the incidence of child protection substantiations in 2001-02 where the person believed responsible was either the carer or another person living in the household. In less than 1 per cent of cases in all jurisdictions that provided data, except Queensland (3.8 per cent), children in out of home care were subject to a substantiation and the person believed responsible was living in the household (table 15A.20). Data are not comparable across jurisdictions, as a result of differences in policy and recording.

Figure 15.6 Proportion of finalised child protection investigations that were substantiated<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates should not be compared across jurisdictions.

Sources: AIHW *Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, Australia* data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.24, 15A.40, 15A.56, 15A.72, 15A.88, 15A.104, 15A.120 and 15A.136.

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### Service quality — stability of placement

Stability of placement for children placed away from their family for protective reasons is an important indicator of service quality, particularly for those children who require long term placements. Many children will have more than one placement for good reasons (for example, an initial placement followed by a longer term placement).

Data were collected on the number of different placements for children on a care and protection order who had exited out-of-home care in 2001-02. Data were grouped according to the length of time in care (less than 12 months and 12 months or more). For the jurisdictions able to provide data (apart from SA), more than half the children on a care and protection order who exited care in 2001-02 after less than 12 months had had only one placement. The proportion of children who had only one placement ranged from 79.6 per cent in WA to 35.7 per cent in SA (figure 15.7).

Figure 15.7 **Children on a care and protection order and exiting care after less than 12 months, by number of different placements, 2001-02<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Data refer to children exiting care in 2001-02. <sup>b</sup> Out-of-home care data are not the same for each State and Territory. Refer to footnotes in the source table for information about what each jurisdiction's data include.

Source: AIHW *Children in out-of-home care, Australia data collection* (unpublished); table 15A.19.

For the jurisdictions able to provide data, children who had been in out-of-home care longer tended to have had more placements. The proportion of children exiting care in 2001-02 after 12 months or more who had experienced one placement ranged from 65.1 per cent for NSW to 13.3 per cent in the NT (figure 15.8).

**Figure 15.8 Children on a care and protection order and exiting care after 12 months or more, by number of different care placements, 2001-02<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Data refer to children exiting care in 2001-02. <sup>b</sup> Out-of-home care data are not the same for each State and Territory. Refer to footnotes in the source table for information about what each jurisdiction's data include.

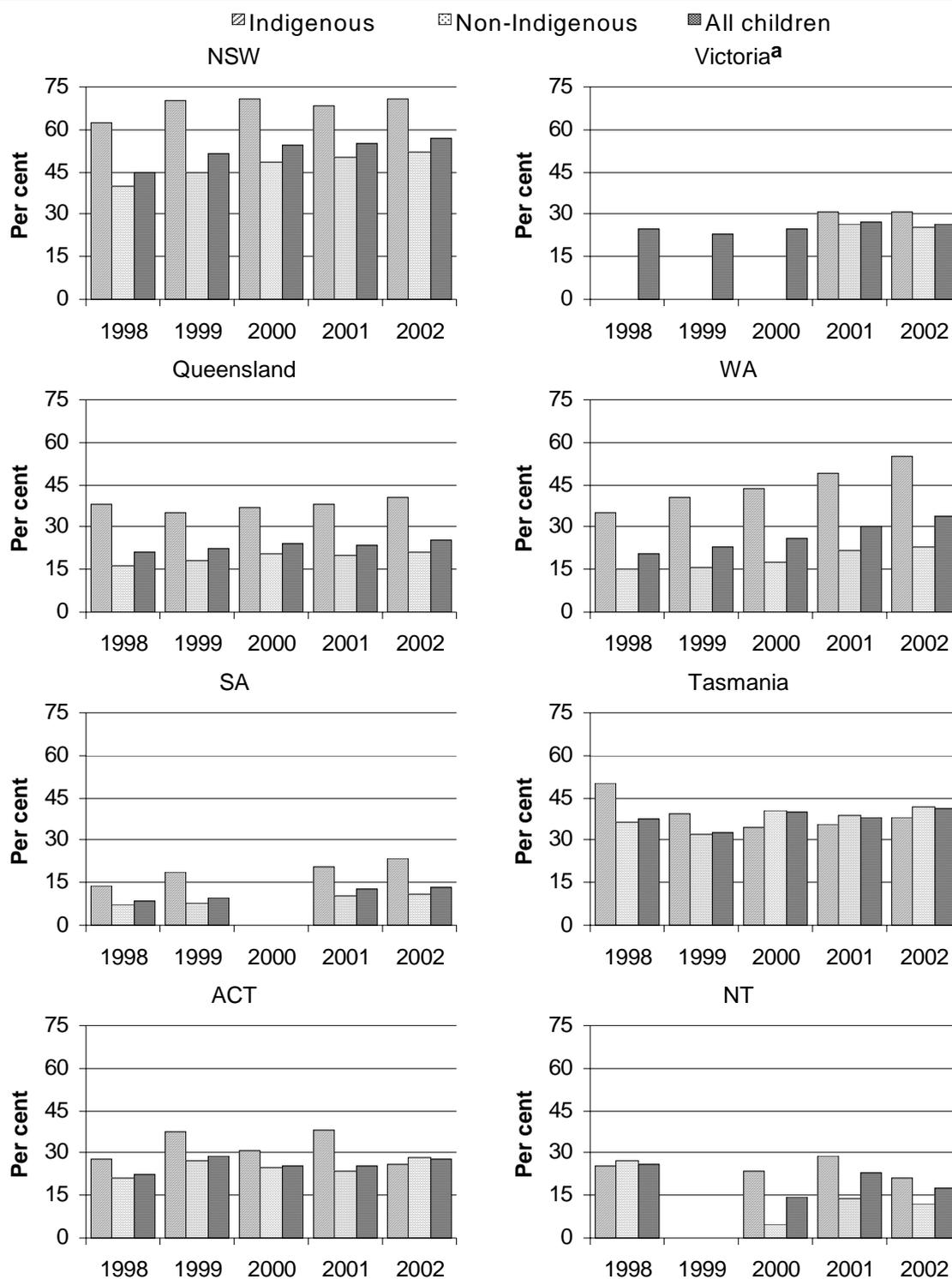
Source: AIHW *Children in out-of-home care, Australia data collection* (unpublished); table 15A.19.

### *Service quality — placement with extended family or in home-based care*

The type of placement is another indicator of the quality of child placement. Placing children with their relatives or kin is generally preferred for children in out-of-home care. The proportion of children placed with relatives or kin at 30 June 2002 ranged from 56.9 per cent in NSW to 13.3 per cent in SA. The proportion of children placed with relatives or kin was greater for Indigenous children than for non-Indigenous children in all jurisdictions except Tasmania and the ACT (figure 15.9).

Placing children in home-based care is generally considered to be in their best interests, particularly for younger children. The proportion of children aged under 12 years who were placed in home-based care at 30 June 2002 ranged from 99.1 per cent in SA to 86.0 per cent in Tasmania. In all jurisdictions except NSW and SA, the proportion of Indigenous children aged under 12 years placed in home-based care was smaller than the proportion of non-Indigenous children (figure 15.10).

**Figure 15.9 Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, 30 June**

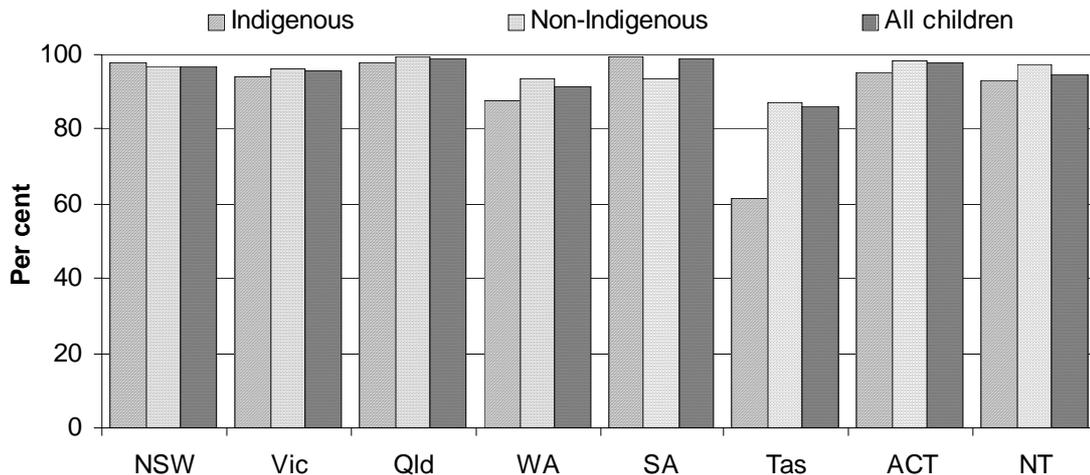


<sup>a</sup> Prior to 2001, Victoria was unable to provide data by Indigenous status.

Sources: AIHW *Children in out-of-home care, Australia data collection* (unpublished); tables 15A.35, 15A.51, 15A.67, 15A.83, 15A.99, 15A.115, 15A.131 and 15A.147.

It is also desirable to place children locally, so some elements of their life remain unchanged (for example, enabling the child to continue attendance at the same school). Data are not yet available for this indicator.

**Figure 15.10 Proportion of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care placed in home-based care, by Indigenous status, 30 June 2002**



Source: AIHW *Children in out-of-home care, Australia data collection* (unpublished); table 15A.18.

### *Service quality — placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle*

According to the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, the following hierarchy or placement preference should be pursued for Indigenous children:

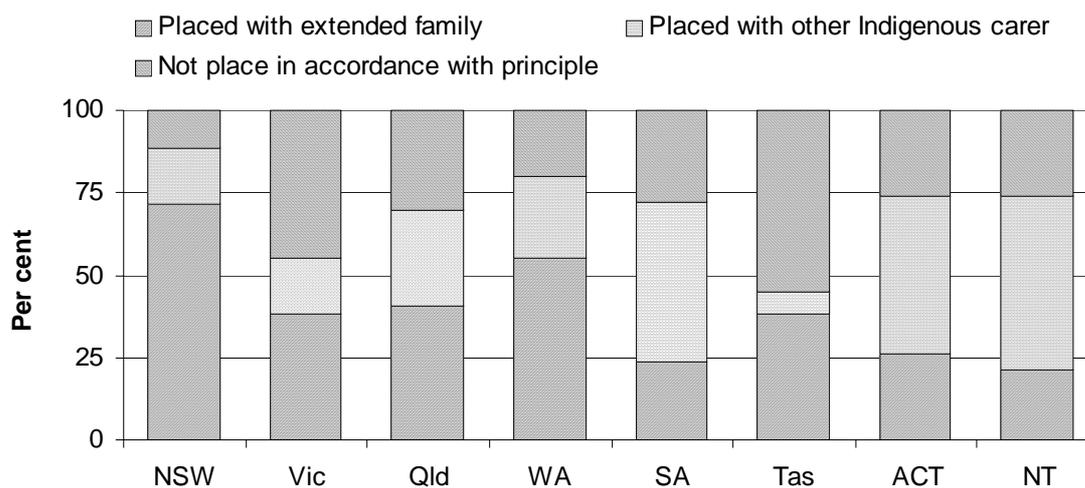
- placement with the child's extended family (which includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous relatives/kin);
- placement within the child's Indigenous community; or
- placement with other Indigenous people (NLRC 1997).

All jurisdictions have adopted this principle either in legislation or policy. The proportion of Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2002 placed in accordance with the principle ranged from 88.3 per cent in NSW to 44.8 per cent in Tasmania (figure 15.11).

The preferred placement option outlined under the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle is placement with the child's extended family. The proportion of Indigenous children in out-of-home care placed with extended family at 30 June 2002 ranged from 71.6 per cent in NSW to 21.4 per cent in the NT. Placement with other Indigenous care providers (the child's Indigenous community or other

Indigenous people) also complies with the principle. The proportion, at 30 June 2002, placed with other Indigenous care providers ranged from 52.4 per cent in the NT to 16.3 per cent in NSW (table 15A.17).

**Figure 15.11 Placement of Indigenous children in out-of-home care, 30 June 2002<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Excludes Indigenous children living independently and those whose living arrangements were unknown. <sup>b</sup> 'Placed with another Indigenous carer' includes those living in Indigenous residential care. <sup>c</sup> Note that data for Tasmania and the ACT relate to a small number of Indigenous children (29 and 27 respectively) in care at 30 June 2002.

Source: AIHW *Children in out-of-home care, Australia data collection* (unpublished); table 15A.17.

### Customer satisfaction

Client views can be used to report on service delivery and to learn important information about how to improve services. Although the use of client surveys in child protection services is not yet common, the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Queensland Department of Families have completed exploratory work in this area.

### Victorian child protection client and family survey

The DHS commissioned a survey in 2001 of clients and family members who had reached the substantiation stage in their engagement with the Victorian child protection system. Survey respondents included 457 young people aged 11–18 years old and 472 parents and family members. The survey was designed to assess the child protection service by focusing on the following for clients and families:

- 
- *their experience during initial involvement*, with a focus on whether the respondents understood the reason for Child Protection's involvement and actions, were given the opportunity to state their views and were provided with accessible information on what needed to be done and their options, and whether they accepted Child Protection's involvement as reasonable;
  - *their perceptions of child protection workers*, with a focus on the child protection workers' responsiveness, issues associated with continuity and general understanding of the respondents' circumstances;
  - *their involvement in decisions*, with a focus on whether the respondents' views were acknowledged and their support for progress and processes for dealing with disagreements about decisions;
  - *their experience with links to other services*, with a focus on the availability of information and support to access other services, and whether these services were beneficial to the respondents;
  - *their overall perceptions of child protection services*, with a focus on perceptions of the child care workers (whether they were fair, helpful and inclusive), whether the services were beneficial (by improving the clients sense of safety, helping the client access needed help, making the client's overall circumstances better), and the respondents' general level of satisfaction with the service; and
  - *out-of-home placement experiences*, with a focus on whether the respondents were informed of the reason for placement and whether there was active encouragement to maintain contact with the family.

The survey revealed a number of specific strengths along with areas for improvement. The strengths in child protection practice included:

- that child protection intervention improved the safety (69 per cent) and life circumstances (75 per cent) of young people who were clients;
- that the majority of parents and families reported that they understood the reason for child protection involvement (62 per cent), were provided with information about other services (62 per cent) and were given reasons for actions (68 per cent); and
- that where young people were placed in out-of-home care, child protection intervention outcomes were better for clients living with relatives.

The survey also identified the following areas for improvement:

- the extent of, and arrangements for, worker changeover;
- the level of contact from workers, including telephone contact and visits;
- the lack of opportunity for decisions to be reviewed and the minimal involvement of families in decision making;

- poor satisfaction of parents of adolescent clients with child protection;
- clients' understanding of information and the linking of families with appropriate services; and
- the level of support and encouragement provided to family members in their contact with young people placed in out-of-home care.

### *Queensland Client and Carer Survey*

The Queensland Department of Families commissioned Colmar Brunton Social Research to plan, implement and analyse the Client and Carer Survey (CBSR 2001). The survey objectives included the establishment of baseline data to inform appropriate benchmarks of client and carer satisfaction, and to provide data on which service areas need to be improved. The survey — which commenced in July 2000 and was finalised in October 2001 — canvassed 216 young people in the guardianship of the department, 150 parents of children or young people who were subject to case work intervention, and 477 foster carers.

The key findings were that approximately 50 per cent of young people surveyed, nearly half of the carers surveyed and approximately 30 per cent of parents surveyed were satisfied with the services received over the previous 12 months (table 15.1).

**Table 15.1 Proportion of respondents to the Queensland Client and Carer Survey who were 'satisfied' with the service they had received, 2000 (per cent)<sup>a</sup>**

	<i>Young people</i>	<i>Parents</i>	<i>Carers</i>
Overall satisfaction with service received over previous 12 months	50.5	29.3	48.2
Overall satisfaction with amount of contact with family services officer	46.8	34.7	51.3
Overall satisfaction with number of family services officer over previous 12 months	55.1	38.3	<b>na</b>
Overall satisfaction with number of placements	71.8	41.4	<b>na</b>
Overall satisfaction with the care received	83.8	50.7	<b>na</b>

<sup>a</sup> In the survey, levels of satisfaction with services overall and with a number of service aspects, were measured using a 10-point scale. Respondents were able to choose any number from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied). To assist in analysis, scores towards the lower end of the scale (1–4) were summed and categorised as 'dissatisfied' and higher scores (7–10) were summed and categorised as 'satisfied'. **na** Not available.

Source: Colmar Brunton Social Research (CBSR) (2001).

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## Efficiency

Understanding the efficiency of the child protection systems that they administer helps State and Territory governments to identify the key cost drivers of their systems and to weigh the efficacy of options for addressing child protection issues.

### *Challenges in reporting efficiency for child protection systems*

Although the Review is committed to reporting comparable efficiency data, identifying and measuring comparable and meaningful unit cost indicators for child protection is problematic. As outlined in section 15.1, the child protection systems in Australia have evolved under the auspices of State and Territory governments so the emphasis of the systems and processes varies across jurisdictions. Further, across most jurisdictions, there is an increasing but variable emphasis on tailoring services to meet the individual client's needs, including a greater focus on diversionary options (box 15.1). In addition, in many jurisdictions, there is not an easy separation between the delivery of child protection services, out-of-home care services and other support services for families. It is difficult, therefore, to apportion costs consistently across these services. Finally, the State and Territory agencies responsible for child protection issues are typically encompassed within larger community services departments, and it can be difficult to identify discretely many of the costs associated with child protection. (Table 15A.4 identifies the level of consistency in expenditure data across jurisdictions.)

### *The pathways project*

In April 2002, the Protection and Support Working Group initiated a project to develop a method for annual reporting of efficiency data for a national framework of protection and support pathways. This project was completed in January 2003. The model proposed in the final consultancy report is expected to influence efficiency reporting for protection and support services for future Reports.

### *Limitations of reported indicators*

This Report includes proxy efficiency indicators for child protection and out-of-home care.

### *Issues with child protection efficiency indicators*

Three different indicators of child protection costs are provided. These indicators were calculated by dividing total expenditure on child protection by the numbers of

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notifications, investigations and substantiations. They do not indicate the cost per notification, cost per investigation and cost per substantiation so need to be interpreted with care. The three different indicators are:

- **total expenditure on child protection** per notification;
- **total expenditure on child protection** per investigation; and
- **total expenditure on child protection** per substantiation.

While these indicators may provide some insight into the cost of providing child protection services, they should not be added together.

#### *Issues with out-of-home care efficiency indicators*

The out-of-home care proxy efficiency indicators look at the cost of placements in residential care, non-residential care and all residential care (the sum of the previous two). Some jurisdictions are unable to disaggregate their expenditure into residential and non-residential care. The number of children in each type of care is available for a snapshot day on 30 June each year. This allows for the following three proxy efficiency indicators for out-of-home care:

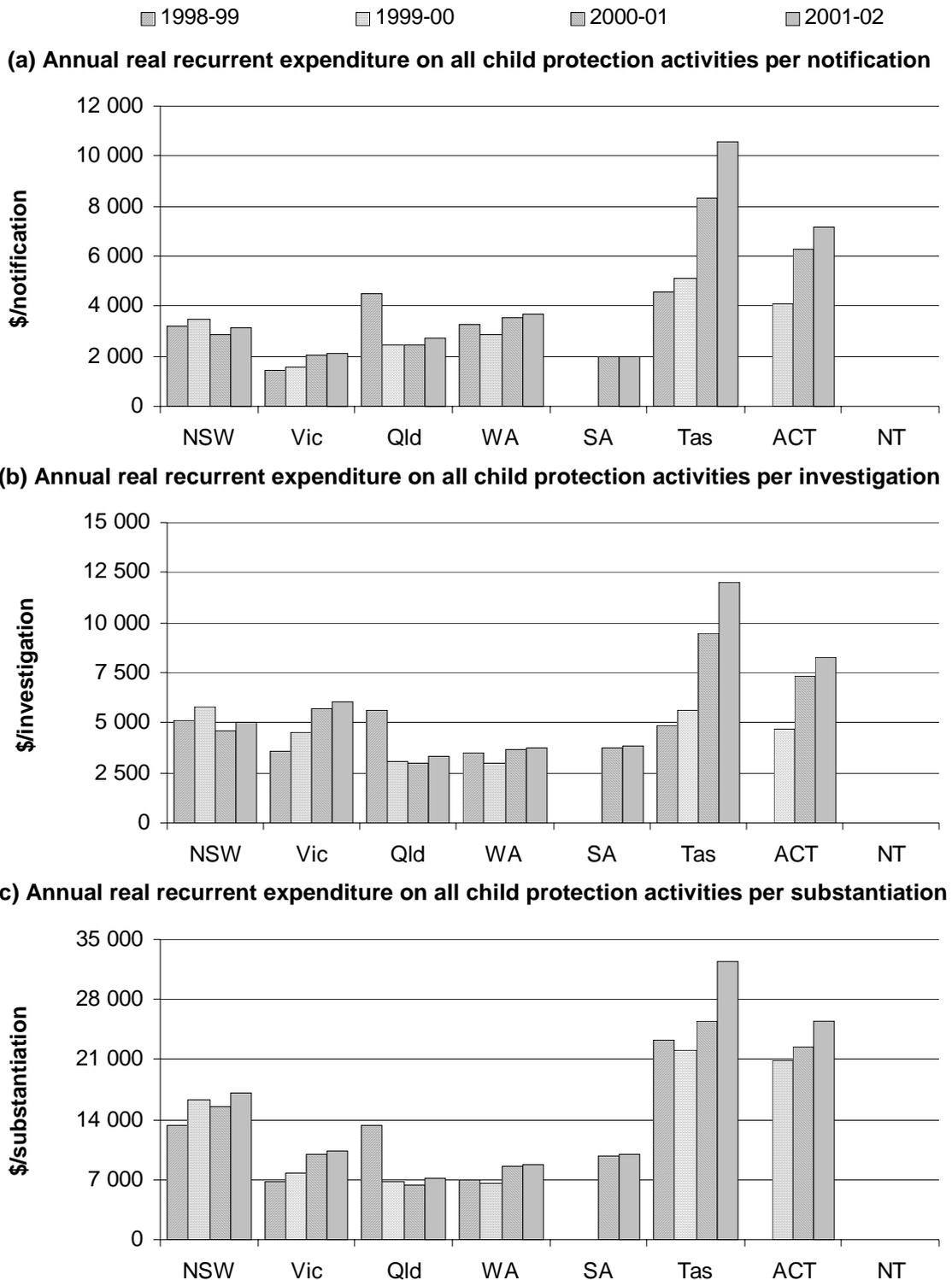
- annual expenditure on residential out-of-home care per child in residential care at 30 June;
- annual expenditure on non-residential out-of-home care per child in non-residential care at 30 June; and
- annual expenditure on all out-of-home care per child in all types of out-of-home care at 30 June.

Although more robust than the child protection indicators, these indicators still need to be treated with caution. Specifically, they do not represent the cost of providing out-of-home care to an individual child. Basing expenditure per child on the number of children in care at 30 June overstates the cost per child, because significantly more children are in care during a year than at a point in time. In addition, some children may have longer periods in care than others have, which may lead the actual cost of providing out-of-home care to an individual child to be significantly overstated.

#### *Child protection efficiency indicator results*

Total expenditure on child protection per notification in 2001-02 ranged from \$3653 in WA to \$1984 in SA (excluding Tasmania and the ACT) (figure 15.12a). Total expenditure on child protection per investigation in 2001-02 ranged from \$6010 in

Figure 15.12 **Child protection efficiency indicators (2001-02 dollars)<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Real expenditure based on ABS GDP price deflator 2001-02 = 100 (table A.26). <sup>b</sup> These data should not be interpreted as the 'cost per notification', 'cost per investigation' or 'cost per substantiation' because each is based on the total cost of all child protection activities. Differences across jurisdictions reflect the quantity of the three activities rather than a difference in unit costs.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.2.

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Victoria to \$3285 in Queensland (excluding Tasmania and the ACT) (figure 15.12b). Total expenditure on child protection per substantiation in 2001-02 ranged from \$17 011 in NSW to \$7092 in Queensland (excluding Tasmania and the ACT) (figure 15.12c).

Tasmania's relatively high expenditure may be attributed to the fact that the number of notifications, investigations and substantiations counted for this Report represent child harm/maltreatment activity data, which is only one component of child protection activity that is occurring.

The ACT's relatively high expenditure may relate to the fixed costs associated with maintaining a child protection system and the economies of scale available to other jurisdictions.

#### *Out-of-home care efficiency indicator results*

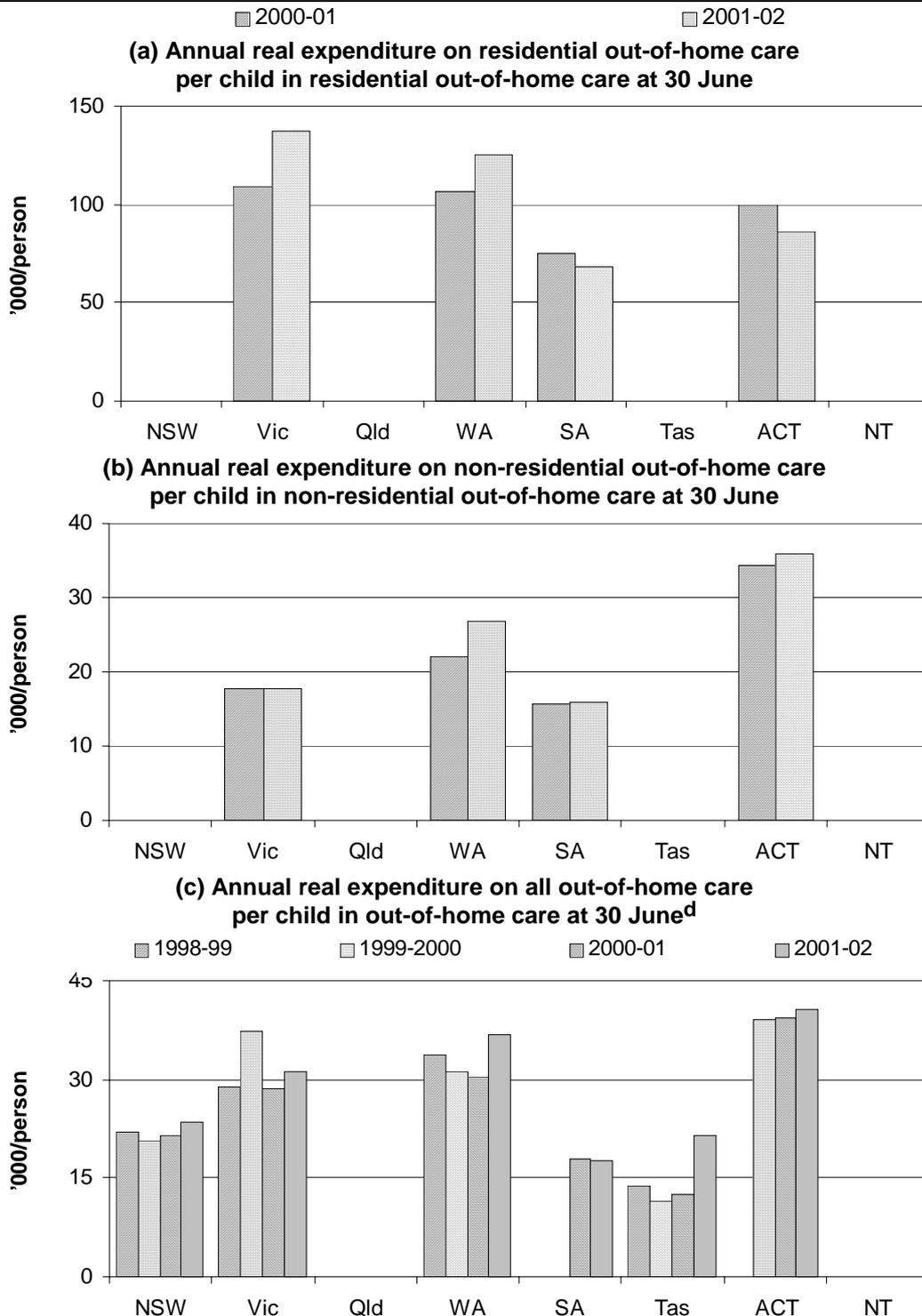
All jurisdictions except NSW, Tasmania and the NT were able to separate expenditure on out-of-home care into expenditure on residential care and expenditure on non-residential care. For those jurisdictions that provided data, expenditure on residential care ranged from about \$137 218 per child in residential care at 30 June 2002 in Victoria to about \$68 205 in SA (figure 15.13a). (WA expenditure may be overstated because it includes corporate and policy costs and funding to the non-government agencies). For those jurisdictions that provided data on non-residential care, expenditure ranged from about \$35 990 per child in non-residential care at 30 June 2002 in the ACT to \$15 840 in SA (figure 15.13b). For those jurisdictions that provided data, total expenditure on residential care per child in care at 30 June 2002 ranged from \$40 647 in the ACT to \$17 767 in SA (figure 15.13c).

## **15.5 Future directions in child protection and out-of-home care services performance reporting**

### **Improving the national child protection data**

Between 2000 and 2002 the National Child Protection and Support Services data working group undertook a review of the reporting framework used to collect the national child protection data. The National Community Services Information Management Group, sponsored this review, which aimed to

Figure 15.13 Out-of-home care efficiency indicators (2001-02 dollars)<sup>a, b, c</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Real expenditure based on ABS GDP price deflator 2001-02 = 100 (table A.26). <sup>b</sup> Queensland data for residential and non-residential out-of-home care are an estimated breakdown only. <sup>c</sup> Using the number of children in care at 30 June rather than the total number of children in care during the year leads to a significant overestimation of costs for WA. <sup>d</sup> ACT data are affected by the higher subsidy levels for carers, higher SACS award costs in the ACT due to a more recently negotiated agreement, and the effect of a small number of children in care with special high support needs.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.3.

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establish the feasibility of updating the national reporting framework so the national data:

- more accurately reflect the current responses of States and Territories to child protection and child concern reports;
- present a more comprehensive data set; and
- increase the consistency and comparability of the data reported upon.

The review resulted in the development of a broader framework to count responses to calls received by community services departments in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children. The responses include those that occur outside the formal child protection system. The new framework incorporates data elements such as the provision of advice and information, the assessment of needs, and general and intensive family support services. Subject to data availability and jurisdictional sign-off, national reporting will be aligned to this framework over the next few years. As part of this process, the current scope of the intensive family support services data collection (described in box 15.2) will be reviewed.

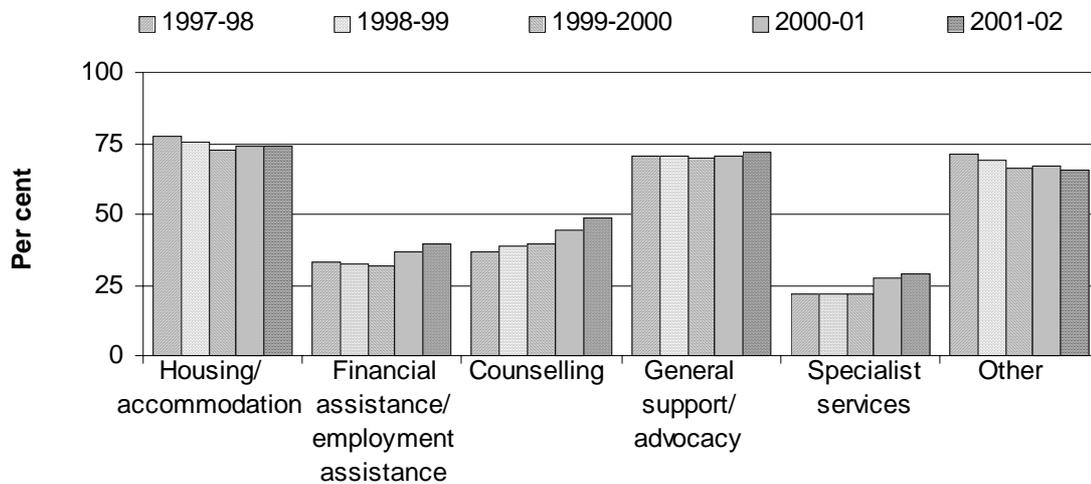
## **15.6 Profile of supported accommodation and assistance**

### **Service overview**

Supported accommodation and assistance services aim to assist people who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless as a result of a crisis, including women and children escaping domestic violence. Sections 15.6–15.10 report on services provided under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP).

The primary focus of SAAP is to use a case management approach to support homeless people and women and children escaping domestic violence. Through this process, clients are offered a range of services, including supported accommodation; counselling; advocacy; links to housing, health, education and employment services; outreach support; brokerage; and meals services. Housing and accommodation services were provided in 74.0 per cent of support periods in 2001-02. General support and advocacy (provided in 71.9 per cent of support periods), counselling (48.3 per cent), financial and employment assistance (39.3 per cent) and specialist services (29.2 per cent) were also commonly provided (figure 15.14).

Figure 15.14 SAAP support periods, by type of service received<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Agencies may provide more than one type of service as a part of a single support period, so services provided do not sum to 100 per cent.

Source: SAAP National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.152.

## Size and scope

Support services funded by SAAP are provided by agencies to a range of groups, such as homeless families, single men, single women, young people, and women and children escaping domestic violence. At least 1286 agencies are funded under the SAAP program and most target principally one client group. Services were delivered in 2001-02 by agencies targeting:

- young people (37.0 per cent of agencies);
- women escaping domestic violence (22.5 per cent);
- single men (7.5 per cent);
- families (9.4 per cent); and
- single women (3.6 per cent).

Agencies targeting multiple client groups or providing general support accounted for 20.0 per cent of service providers in 2001-02 (table 15A.153).

Agencies also vary in their service delivery model. The most common models in 2001-02 were the provision of medium to long term supported accommodation (37.6 per cent of agencies) and the provision of crisis or short term supported accommodation (34.1 per cent). Agencies also provided services other than accommodation, such as outreach support (5.4 per cent of agencies), day support

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(1.9 per cent) and telephone information and referral (1.3 per cent). A further 13.1 per cent of agencies provided multiple services and 1.8 per cent provide agency support (table 15A.154).

## **Roles and responsibilities**

Primarily non-government agencies, with some local government participation, deliver SAAP services. The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments jointly fund SAAP, which was established in 1985 to consolidate a number of existing programs. The State and Territory governments have responsibility for the day-to-day management of SAAP, including distributing funding to SAAP funded agencies. Research, strategy, and other planning and development activities are coordinated at the national level by the SAAP National Coordination and Development Committee (which includes representatives of the Commonwealth Government and each State and Territory government).

## **Funding**

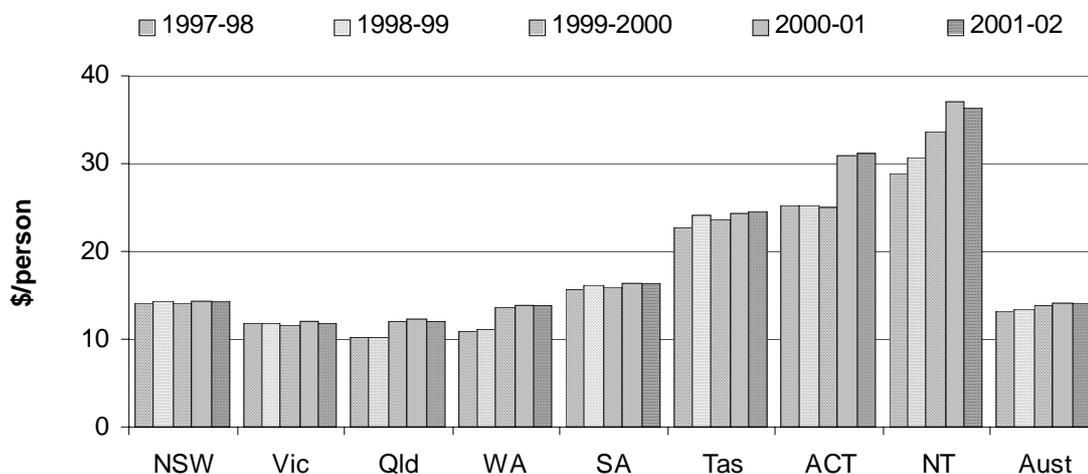
Recurrent funding of SAAP services was \$277.2 million in 2001-02, of which the Commonwealth Government contributed 58.5 per cent and the States and Territories contributed 41.4 per cent (table 15A.155). Combined Commonwealth, State and Territory government funding for the period 1997-98 to 2001-02 increased (in real terms) in all jurisdictions, with the largest increases experienced in the NT (from \$28.95 per person to \$36.35 per person), the ACT (from \$25.20 to \$31.09) and WA (from \$10.91 to \$13.77) over the period (table 15A.157). Recurrent SAAP funding per person in the total population was \$14.09 nationally in 2001-02. It ranged from \$36.35 in the NT to \$11.81 in Victoria (figure 15.15).

## **15.7 Policy developments in supported accommodation and assistance**

The SAAP IV Agreement between the Commonwealth, States and Territories commenced on 1 July 2000 and will conclude on 30 June 2005. The agreement is underpinned by:

- the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*;
- a Memorandum of Understanding, which sets out high level principles, strategic themes, a commitment to develop outcomes and measures of outcomes, roles and responsibilities, and arrangements for implementation. All signatories endorsed this memorandum on 8 April 1999; and

Figure 15.15 Real recurrent SAAP funding per person in the residential population (2001-02 dollars)<sup>a, b, c, d</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Includes total recurrent allocations (including State and Territory level allocations for program administration). <sup>b</sup> The total population figure is not indicative of the demand for these services. <sup>c</sup> In the NT, funding has increased as a result of the provision of additional award-related funding <sup>d</sup> Real expenditure based on the ABS GDP price deflator 2001-02 = 100 (table A.26).

Source: Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (unpublished); table 15A.157; table A.26.

- bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth Government and each State and Territory government. These bilateral agreements establish State and Territory priorities within a multilateral policy and administrative framework, and establish outcomes for funding. All jurisdictions have signed bilateral agreements with the Commonwealth Government.

A National Strategic Plan for SAAP IV has been developed, approved and widely distributed. This plan is based on the Memorandum of Understanding and the bilateral agreements, and represents the basis for national reporting on SAAP IV (box 15.4). The plan will be reflected in State and Territory planning, which will also respond to the needs and priorities of individual jurisdictions.

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#### **Box 15.4 Evaluation and reporting under SAAP IV**

The Memorandum of Understanding requires the development of a National Strategic Plan which identifies the key principles, priorities, strategies, data, research and other project commitments of SAAP IV. The plan sets out a national evaluation and reporting framework that will comprise:

- an annual national program report that provides:
  - ... an analysis of achievements, including analysis against program outcomes and performance indicators; and
  - ... a commentary on, and identification of, areas for further development and attention in subsequent years;
- a mid-term review; and
- a final evaluation report to be completed 12 months before the end of the SAAP IV Agreement.

Outcomes and performance indicators form the accountability framework in bilateral agreements and are the basis for review, evaluation and national annual reporting.

An evaluation framework has been cooperatively developed as part of the National Strategic Plan and focuses on:

- client outcomes, particularly the extent to which SAAP demonstrates capacity to:
  - ... resolve crises;
  - ... re-establish family links where appropriate; and
  - ... re-establish a capacity of clients to live independently of SAAP;
- client satisfaction with aspects of service delivery, including quality, accessibility, appropriateness and achievement of outcomes;
- the extent to which the strategic themes, directions and administrative framework for SAAP IV are addressed and implemented; and
- measures of performance in relation to appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness.

*Source:* SAAP IV Memorandum of Understanding.

## **15.8 Framework of supported accommodation and assistance performance indicators**

### **Framework of performance indicators**

The framework of performance indicators is based on SAAP objectives (box 15.5).

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**Box 15.5 Objectives for SAAP services**

The overall aim of SAAP is to provide transitional supported accommodation and a range of related support services, so as to help people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence. Within this aim, the goals are to:

- resolve crises;
- re-establish family links where appropriate; and
- re-establish the capacity of clients to live independently of SAAP.

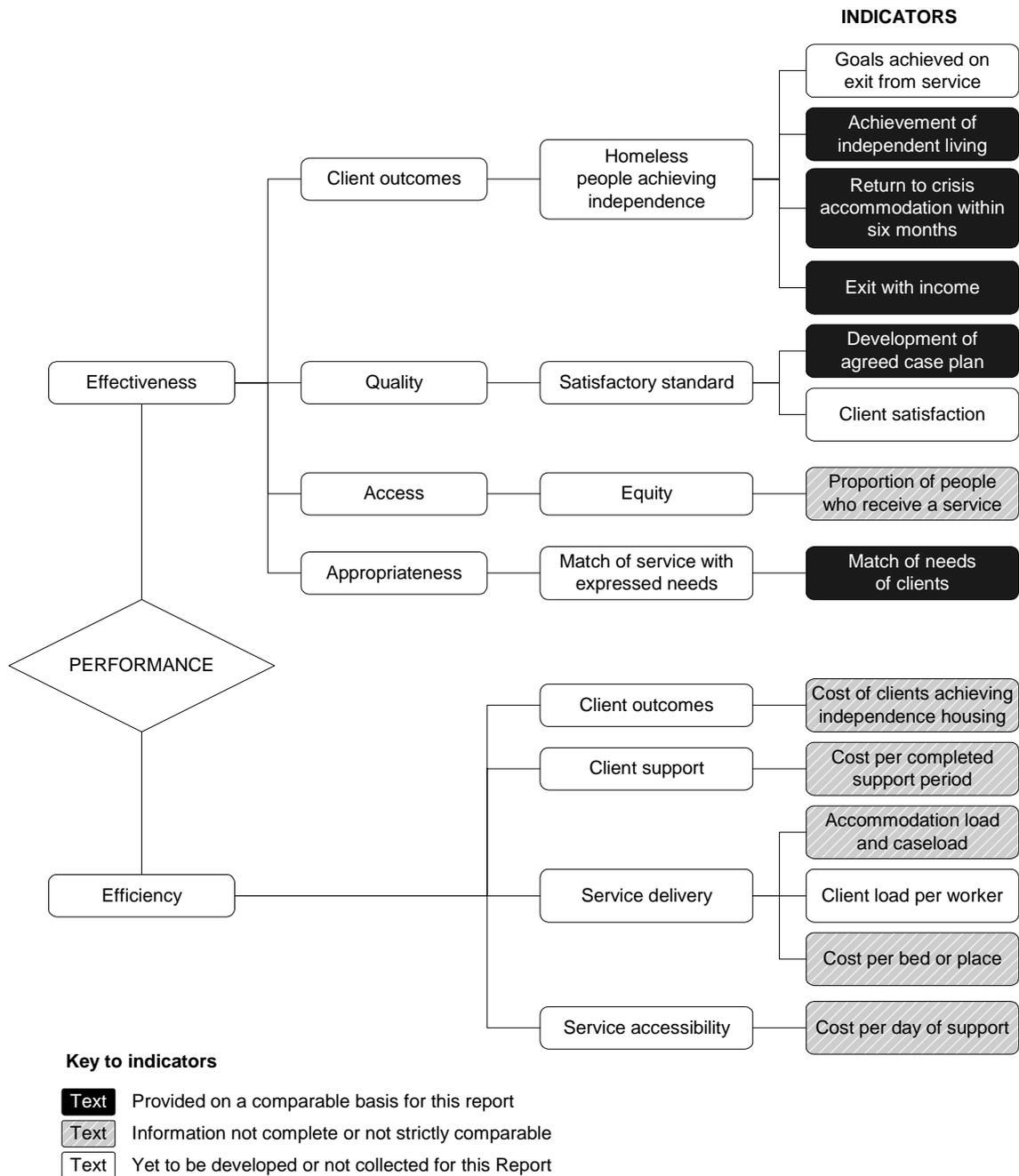
These services should be provided in an equitable and efficient manner.

The performance indicator reporting framework for SAAP is shown in figure 15.16. (Ongoing work to provide a more comprehensive set of performance indicators and to improve existing indicators and the data is discussed in section 15.10.) The framework shows which data are comparable in the 2003 Report. For data that are not considered strictly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

#### *New and refined indicators*

The 2003 Report for the first time includes data relating to Indigenous clients in the areas of income, housing, labour force status and SAAP support periods.

Figure 15.16 Performance indicators for SAAP services



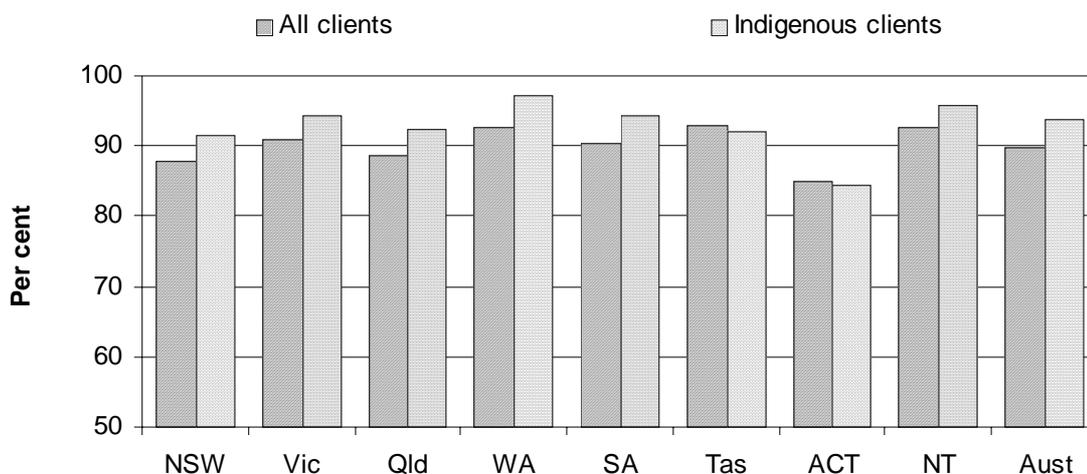
## 15.9 Key supported accommodation and assistance performance indicator results

### Client outcomes — achievement of independent living

An important outcome is clients' achievement of self reliance and independence. Characteristics that may indicate whether clients can live independently include their income, housing status and workforce status. These characteristics of clients are recorded at the end of their support period.

In all jurisdictions in 2001-02, most clients had no substantive change in income source between entering and exiting the program (figure 15.17). The majority of clients entering SAAP were receiving government benefits, and they were still receiving them when they exited SAAP support.

Figure 15.17 **Proportion of clients who had no substantive change in income source after SAAP support, by Indigenous status, 2001-02<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Excludes clients of high volume agencies (those accommodating 50 or more clients per night, telephone referral agencies, day centres, and information and referral centres) because data on income source after support were not collected.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); tables 15A.158 and 15A.159.

Client independence is enhanced when the client moves from having no income before entering SAAP services to obtaining some income (including wages and/or benefits) on exit from SAAP services. The proportion of all clients in 2001-02 who had no substantive change in income source ranged from about 93.0 per cent in Tasmania to 84.9 per cent in the ACT.

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The proportion of clients in 2001-02 who moved from having no income support to obtaining some income ranged from 3.5 per cent in the ACT to 2.1 per cent in Queensland, WA and the NT. The proportion of clients who obtained their own benefit or a wage ranged from 2.0 per cent in SA to 0.8 per cent in Tasmania. The proportion who had no income before or after support ranged from 9.9 per cent in the ACT to 2.9 per cent in the NT. Nationally, 0.9 per cent of clients exiting the program moved from having a wage to receiving a government payment, or from having some income to having no income (table 15A.158).

The proportion of Indigenous clients in 2001-02 who had no substantive change in income source ranged from about 97.1 per cent in WA to 84.5 per cent in the ACT. The proportion who moved from having no income support to obtaining some income ranged from 2.2 per cent in NSW to 0.5 per cent in WA. The proportion who obtained their own benefit or a wage ranged from 1.2 per cent in Victoria to 0.2 per cent in WA. The proportion of Indigenous clients in 2001-02 who had no income before or after support ranged from 12.6 per cent in the ACT to 1.9 per cent in WA. Nationally, 0.4 per cent of clients exiting the program moved from having a wage to receiving a government payment, or from having some income to having no income (table 15A.159).

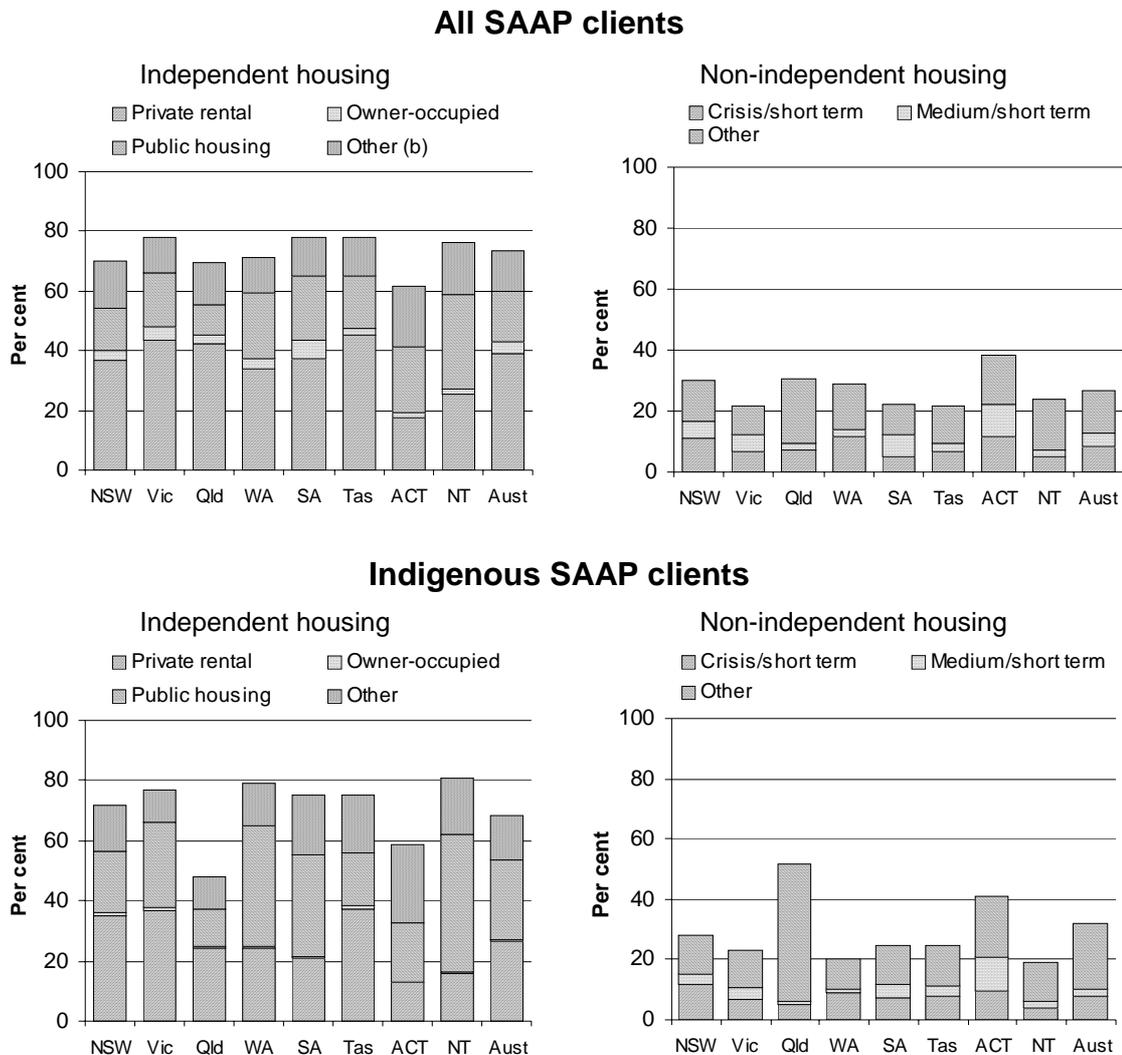
The proportion of clients achieving independent living at the end of a support period indicates the independence of clients after program support. Nationally, 73.5 per cent of clients achieved independent housing at the end of a support period in 2001-02 (figure 15.19). Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 78.2 per cent in Victoria and Tasmania to 61.8 per cent in the ACT. Data are available for only one third of completed support periods, so may not be representative of the total SAAP population. Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous clients achieving independent housing at the end of a support period was 68.1 per cent in 2001-02 (figure 15.18).

By type of independent housing on exiting from SAAP, 39.2 per cent of all clients in 2001-02 moved to private rental housing (26.6 per cent of Indigenous clients), 17.0 per cent entered public housing (26.6 per cent of Indigenous clients) and 3.6 per cent moved to owner-occupied housing (0.6 per cent of Indigenous clients). The proportion of clients moving to private rental housing was highest in Tasmania (45.3 per cent) and lowest in the ACT (17.5 per cent). The proportion moving to public housing ranged from 31.5 per cent in the NT to 10.3 per cent in Queensland (figure 15.18).

By type of non-independent housing, 12.9 per cent of all clients in 2001-02 continued to live in SAAP accommodation (9.9 per cent of Indigenous clients): 8.3 per cent in crisis or short term accommodation (7.6 per cent of Indigenous clients) and 4.6 per cent in medium to long term accommodation (2.3 per cent of

Indigenous clients). The proportion of clients remaining in SAAP accommodation was highest in the ACT (22.5 per cent) and lowest in the NT (7.3 per cent) (figure 15.18).

Figure 15.18 Accommodation type on exit from SAAP support, 2001-02<sup>a, b</sup>



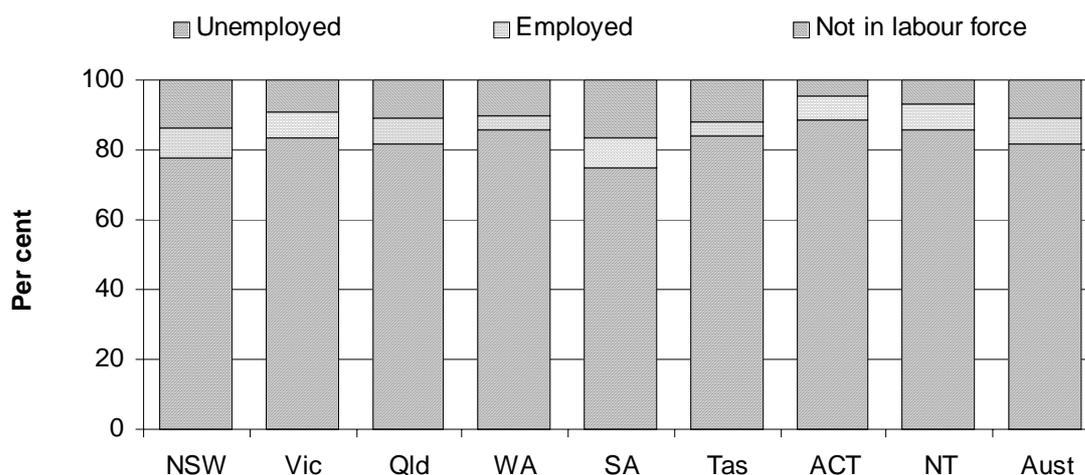
<sup>a</sup> Excludes high volume records because not all items are included in high volume forms. <sup>b</sup> 'Other' independent housing may include living rent free in a house or flat. 'Other' non-independent housing may include: SAAP funded accommodation at hostels, hotels or community placements; non-SAAP emergency accommodation; car, tent or squat; and an institutional setting.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.160.

Employment is another indicator of clients' achievement of self reliance and independence. Nationally, 8.8 per cent of support periods in 2001-02 involved clients who were employed before support, while 33.3 per cent of support periods involved clients who were previously unemployed (table 15A.162). Of the clients who were unemployed when entering the program, about 7.3 per cent were employed at the end of the support period (2.6 per cent full time, 1.5 per cent part

time and 3.2 per cent on a casual basis), 81.6 per cent remained unemployed and 11.1 per cent were not in the labour force (figure 15.19). Across jurisdictions, the proportion of clients who achieved employment at the end of the support period ranged from 8.8 per cent in NSW to 3.7 per cent in Tasmania (Table 5A.163).

**Figure 15.19 Change in the labour force status of clients after SAAP support, 2001-02<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Data are for people who were unemployed when entering SAAP services. <sup>b</sup> Excludes high volume records because not all items are included on high volume forms.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.163.

For Indigenous clients who were unemployed when entering the program in 2001-02, about 4.1 per cent were employed at the end of the support period (1.3 per cent full time, 1.0 per cent part time and 1.7 per cent on a casual basis), 83.4 per cent remained unemployed and 12.6 per cent were not in the labour force (table 15A.164).

The performance information above relates to relatively short term outcomes — that is, outcomes for clients immediately after their support period. Longer term outcomes are important, but there are challenges in collecting information on these outcomes. The data collection for SAAP allows for the measurement of the number of clients and the number and types of service provided to clients (box 15.6).

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### Box 15.6 Issues when analysing SAAP data

The following four important issues need to be considered when analysing SAAP data.

- Informed consent is an essential component of the integrity of the data. The principle of client/consumer rights (which underpins informed consent) recognises that clients do not receive services under a mandatory order. They have the right to accept or reject the services offered, as they have the right to provide or not provide information while receiving SAAP services.
- Comprehensive information cannot be collected for all clients, such as casual clients and clients of high volume agencies (those accommodating 50 or more clients per night, telephone referral agencies, day centres, and information and referral centres).
- Clients consented to provide personal details for the SAAP client collection for 85 per cent of support periods in 2001-02. A weighting system has been developed to adjust for agency non participation (95 per cent of agencies participated in the client collection) and non-consent.
- Caution should be taken when comparing 2001-02 client data with previous years data because 2001-02 data are based on estimated support periods per client rather than observed support periods per client as reported in previous years.

*Source: AIHW (2002).*

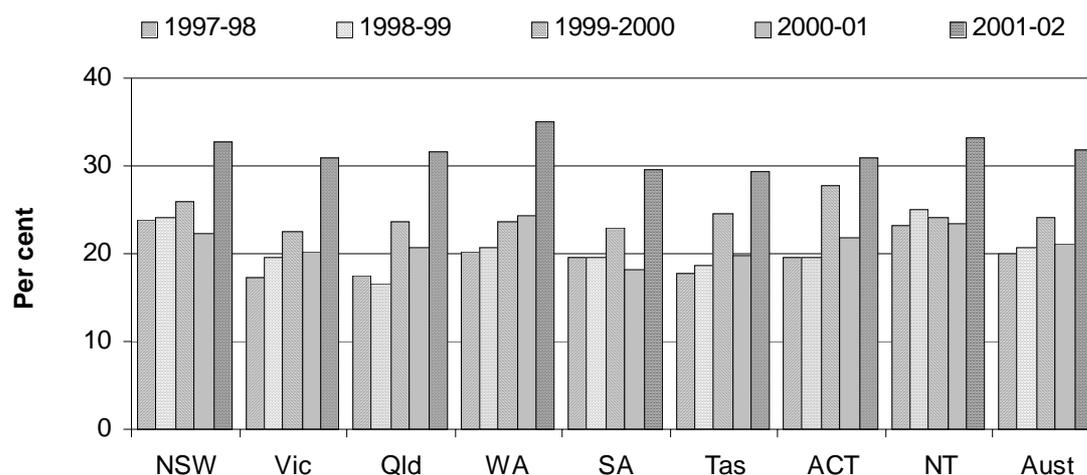
An important longer term indicator of whether clients are achieving self reliance and independence is whether a client has needed to return to SAAP services. If a client received two or more support periods over the year, then they must have returned to the program (but not necessarily to the same agency) for a period of support during the year.

Nationally, 31.8 per cent of clients returned to SAAP services in 2001-02 after having exited the program less than 12 months earlier. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 34.9 per cent in WA to 29.4 per cent in Tasmania (figure 15.20). It may be appropriate, however, for some clients to receive more than one support period (moving from crisis to medium term accommodation, for example). Of Indigenous clients, 35.0 per cent returned to SAAP services nationally in 2001-02 (table 15A.166). One group that makes multiple use of SAAP are women and children escaping domestic violence. A number of SAAP clients with long term problems also access SAAP services a number of times before being able to address their issues.

A further medium term indicator of the achievement of self reliance and independence is when the client exits to independent housing and does not return to SAAP within a specified period (in this case, six months). Given the data issues

discussed above, current estimates may not be representative of all clients; for example, only approximately 49.5 per cent of clients nationally in 2001-02 provided information on their accommodation after exiting at least one support period over the year (table 15.2).

Figure 15.20 **Clients who returned to a SAAP service in 2001-02 after having exited the program less than 12 months earlier<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> 2001-02 data are based on estimated support periods per client rather than on observed support periods per client as reported in previous years.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.165.

Table 15.2 **Indicative estimates of clients who exited SAAP to independent housing and did not return within six months, 2001-02<sup>a, b</sup>**

Unit	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Clients who provided information on accommodation after exit from support									
no.	11 500	15 900	6 900	4 900	3 400	2 000	1 100	1 700	47 300
As a proportion of total clients <sup>c</sup>									
%	45.6	56.4	39.9	57.0	41.5	57.1	61.1	58.6	49.5
Clients recorded as exiting to independent accommodation and not returning within six months									
no.	4 200	6 600	2 800	2 400	1 400	800	400	800	19 300
Indicative estimates of clients exiting to independent housing and not returning within six months <sup>d</sup>									
%	36.5	41.5	40.6	49.0	41.2	40.0	36.4	47.1	40.8

<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 15A.167 for details of how the estimates were calculated. <sup>b</sup> Preliminary data. <sup>c</sup> Estimate based on estimated total number of clients for 2001-2002. <sup>d</sup> Clients recorded as exiting to independent accommodation and not returning within six months as a proportion of clients who provide information on accommodation on exit from support.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.167.

It is possible to estimate the proportion of clients who exit to independent housing and do not return to SAAP within six months (based on the subset of clients who

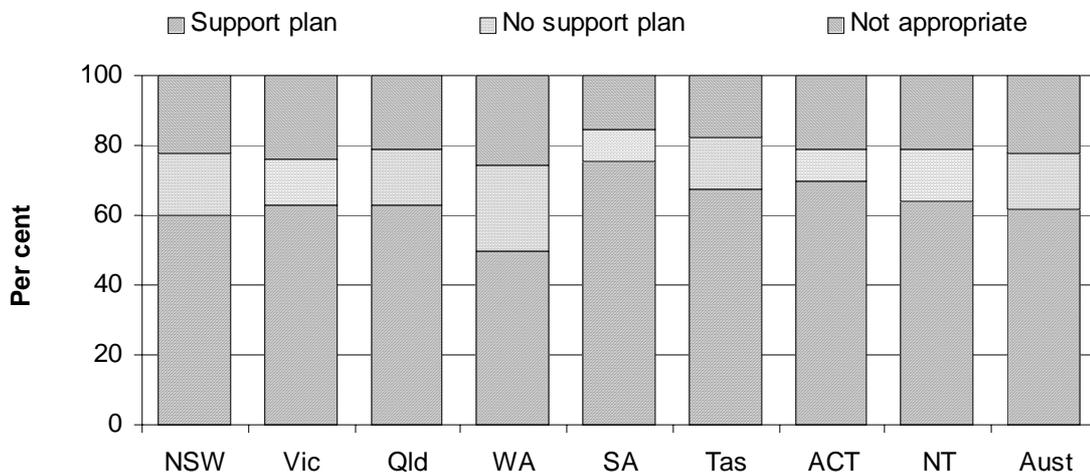
provide information on accommodation after exiting support). Given the potential for bias in the data, however, these estimates should not be used for definitive performance comparisons across jurisdictions. They may be used to prompt further analysis of the reasons for cross-jurisdictional differences.

It is important to have data that are representative of all SAAP clients. Strategies are being implemented to improve the data quality progressively, including improving client consent rates and the collection of exit information. It is hoped that the data will eventually be robust enough to allow comparative performance assessment.

### Quality — development of an agreed support plan

The existence of an agreed support plan is an indicator of service quality and quality in service delivery, but it may be judged to be inappropriate for some support periods (such as when a support period is short term). Nationally, the case worker in 22.2 per cent of support periods in 2001-02 judged that a support plan was inappropriate. Across jurisdictions, this proportion ranged from 25.7 per cent in WA to 15.3 per cent in SA (table 15A.168).

Figure 15.21 **Support periods, by the existence of a support plan, 2001-02<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Excludes high volume records because not all items are included on high volume forms. <sup>b</sup> See notes to table 15A.168 for more detail.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.168.

There was an agreed support plan for 61.9 per cent of support periods nationally in 2001-02. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 75.5 per cent in SA to 49.7 per cent in WA (figure 15.21). Nationally, 62.6 per cent of Indigenous clients had a support plan, 16.8 per cent had no support plan and the case worker in

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20.6 per cent of support periods for Indigenous clients in 2001-02 considered a support plan was inappropriate (table 15A.169).

### **Access and equity — proportion of people who receive a service**

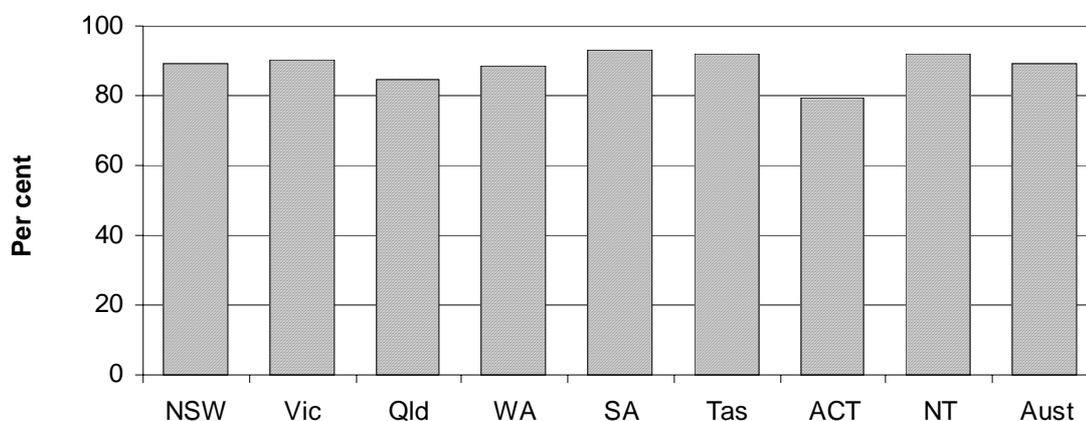
Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) services target homeless people in general, but access by special needs groups (such as Indigenous people and people from non-English speaking backgrounds) is particularly important. Data for assessing access to SAAP services are available from the data collection on unmet demand. Data for 2001-02 were based on surveys conducted between 22–28 August 2001 and 8–14 May 2002.

Assessing the experience of target groups using data from the unmet demand collection is problematic. The client data and unmet demand data are not comparable. The client collection counts clients and each client's cultural status. The unmet demand collection is based on valid requests for services and records the cultural status of everyone in the group — making no distinction between adults and accompanying children. Also, the two-week sample period over which data were collected might not be representative of the eventual success of clients accessing SAAP services over the full year (see notes to tables 15A.170–15A.171).

Requests for SAAP services were not met for a number of reasons in 2001-02, including: lack of available accommodation (the main reason for 88.5 per cent of potential clients who were not provided with services), insufficient staff (2.4 per cent) and lack of facilities for special needs such as disability, culturally specific needs and other special needs (1.9 per cent) (table 15A.170).

The available data suggest that around 89.0 per cent of requests for SAAP services were provided with the assistance requested in the data collection period in 2001-02. The proportion of requests for services that were fulfilled ranged from 93.2 per cent in SA to 79.3 per cent in the ACT (figure 15.22).

Figure 15.22 Proportion of requests for SAAP services that were provided with the requested support, 22–28 August 2001 and 8–14 May 2002<sup>a, b</sup>



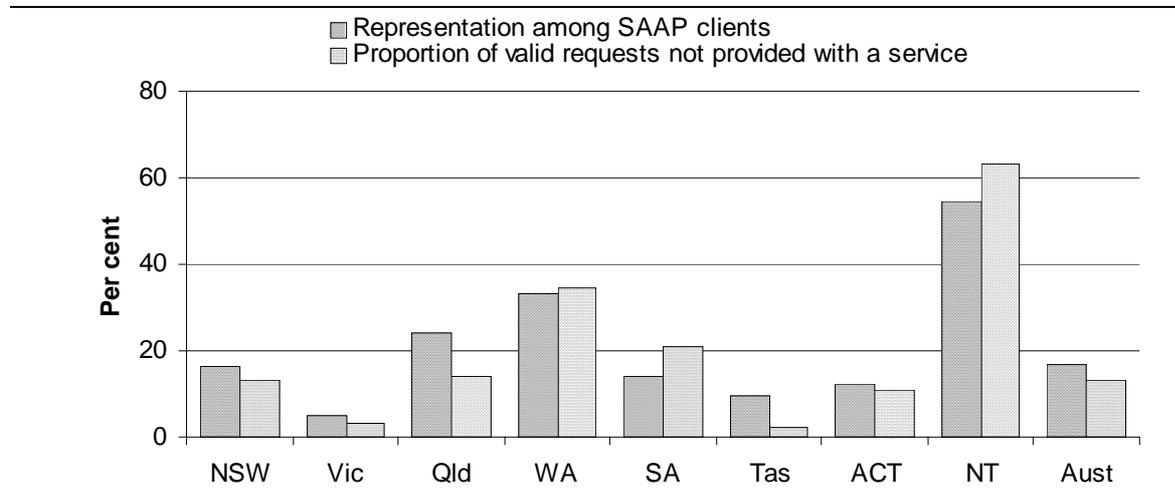
<sup>a</sup> See table 15A.171 for an explanation of how the number of SAAP clients was estimated and for the definition of unmet demand. <sup>b</sup> Data on unmet demand need to be interpreted with care for several reasons. First, a person can make a request on more than one occasion and to more than one SAAP agency. While double counting has been limited through the exclusion of those requests where the person had made a similar request to a SAAP agency within the collection period, this information might not always have been available to record; therefore, the total numbers do not represent actual people. Second, a number of people may receive ongoing support or accommodation from a SAAP agency at a later time, quite possibly soon after their initial request. As a result, this estimate may overstate the actual level of unmet demand. Third, a number of potential clients have their needs met by other means and do not return to a SAAP agency. Many factors influence the capacity of individual SAAP agencies to meet day-to-day demand for their services; it is not possible to identify a two-week period that is 'typical' for all SAAP agencies.

Source: SAAP NDCA Unmet Need and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.171.

Nationally, the proportion of requests for SAAP service from Indigenous people in the data collection period in 2001-02 that did not result in the assistance requested (13.3 per cent) was lower than the representation of Indigenous clients among SAAP clients (16.7 per cent). In all jurisdictions except the SA and the NT (and WA to a lesser extent), the proportion of requests from Indigenous people that did not result in the provision of a service was lower than the representation of Indigenous people among clients (figure 15.23).

On average, the proportion of requests for SAAP service from people of non-English speaking backgrounds that did not result in the assistance requested (6.8 per cent) was lower than the representation of clients from non-English speaking backgrounds among SAAP clients (10.4 per cent) (figure 15.24).

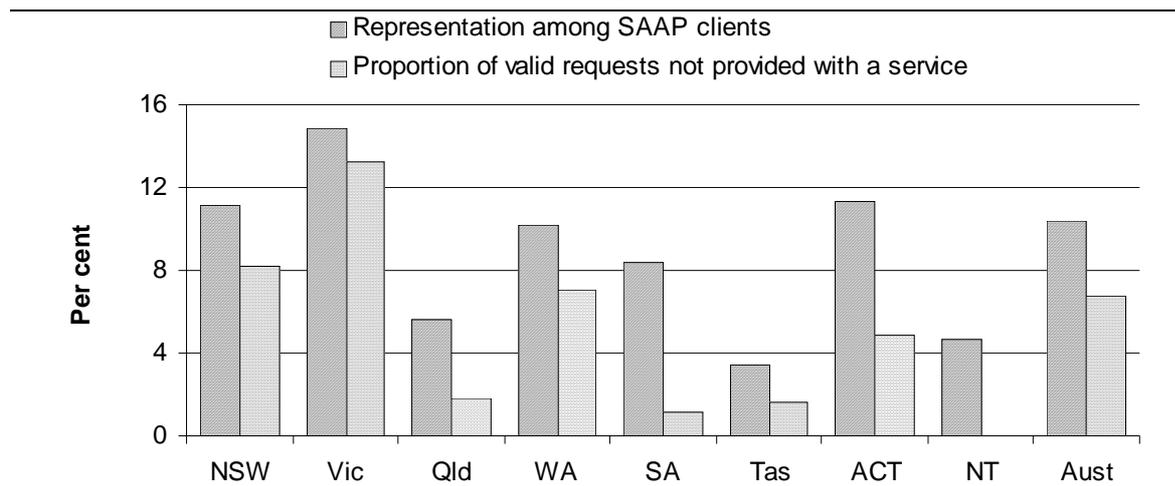
**Figure 15.23 Indigenous people among SAAP clients, and the proportion of requests for SAAP service from Indigenous people that did not result in the assistance requested, 2001-02<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> The number of people unable to be provided with a SAAP service was the 'unmet demand'. See notes to table 15A.172 for more detail. <sup>b</sup> Excludes people who refused offered assistance; those who made a similar request at a SAAP funded agency within the collection period (to limit double counting); and those whose request was not met because either the referral was inappropriate (wrong target group) or the agency did not provide the type of service requested.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.172.

**Figure 15.24 People from non-English speaking backgrounds among SAAP clients, and the proportion of requests for SAAP service from people from non-English speaking backgrounds that did not result in the assistance requested, 2001-02<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> The number of people unable to be provided with a SAAP service was the 'unmet demand'. See notes to table 15A.173 for more detail. <sup>b</sup> Excludes people who refused offered assistance; those who made a similar request at a SAAP funded agency within the collection period (to limit double counting); and those whose request was not met because either the referral was inappropriate (wrong target group) or the agency did not provide the type of service requested.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.173.

## Appropriateness — matching of service with expressed needs

The proportion of clients receiving services that they need is an indicator of appropriateness. Data are collected on which services are needed by clients and whether these services are provided or the clients are referred to another agency. The range of needed services is broad (ranging from meals to laundry facilities to long term accommodation), so the effect of not providing these services varies.

Nationally, the proportion of clients who received needed services or were referred to another agency for needed services was 92.7 per cent in 2001-02. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 97.7 per cent in the NT to 88.3 per cent in Queensland (figure 15.25).

Figure 15.25 SAAP clients, by met and unmet support needs, 2001-02



Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.174.

Nationally, 89.2 per cent of Indigenous clients in 2001-02 either received needed SAAP services or were referred to another agency for these services — 3.5 percentage points lower than the proportion for all clients. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 98.2 per cent in the NT to 83.5 per cent in Queensland (figure 15.26).

Nationally, 94.1 per cent of clients from a non-English speaking background in 2001-02 either received needed services or were referred to another agency. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 96.6 per cent in Queensland to 91.2 per cent in Victoria (figure 15.27).

**Figure 15.26 Indigenous clients, by met and unmet support needs, 2001-02**



Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.175.

**Figure 15.27 Clients from non-English speaking backgrounds, by met and unmet support needs, 2001-02**



Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.176.

## Efficiency

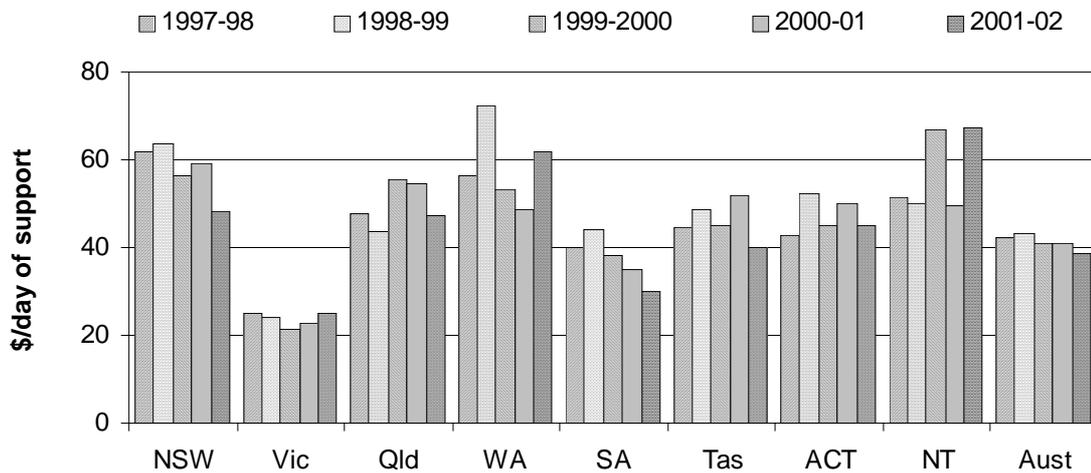
A proxy indicator of efficiency is the level of government inputs per unit of output (unit cost). Across jurisdictions, there are varying treatments of expenditure items (for example, superannuation) and different counting and reporting rules in generating financial data. Efficiency indicator results may reflect these differences.

The unit cost analysis includes only expenditure by service delivery providers. Conceptually, unit cost indicators should include some of the administration costs

borne by State and Territory departments in administering these services, but this is not yet possible. Unit cost data do not contain capital costs because capital funding for SAAP is provided under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement through a special-purpose program (the Crisis Accommodation Program).

The real recurrent cost per day of support for SAAP clients receiving support and/or supported accommodation (excluding casual and potential clients, and accompanying children who receive services as clients in their own right) averaged \$39 in 2001-02. Across jurisdictions, the cost ranged from \$67 in the NT to \$25 in Victoria (figure 15.28).

**Figure 15.28 Real recurrent cost per day of support for homeless clients (2001-02 dollars)<sup>a</sup>**

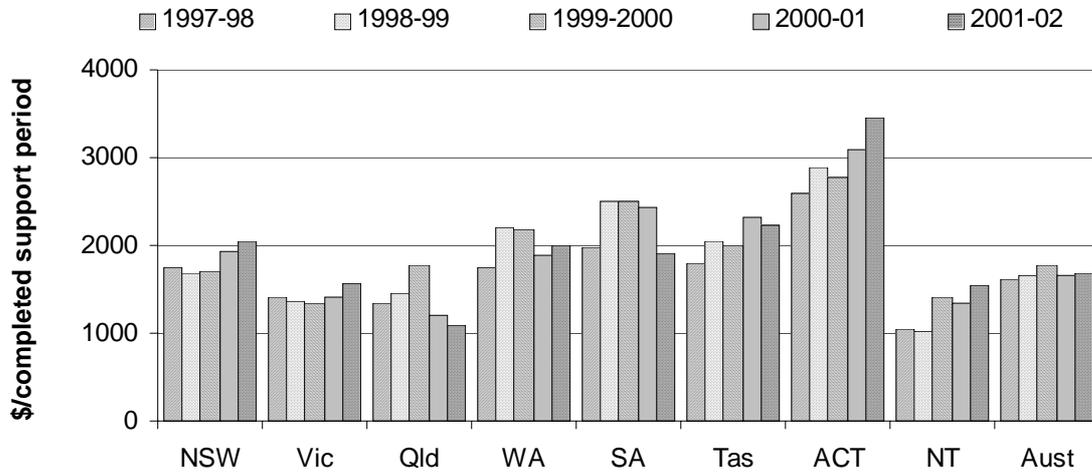


<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 15A.177 for a description of the analysis.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.177.

The recurrent cost per completed support period (excluding casual and potential clients, and accompanying children who received services as clients in their own right) averaged \$1690 in 2001-02. Across jurisdictions, it ranged from \$3450 in the ACT to \$1110 in Queensland (figure 15.29).

**Figure 15.29 Real recurrent cost per completed support period (2001-02 dollars)<sup>a</sup>**

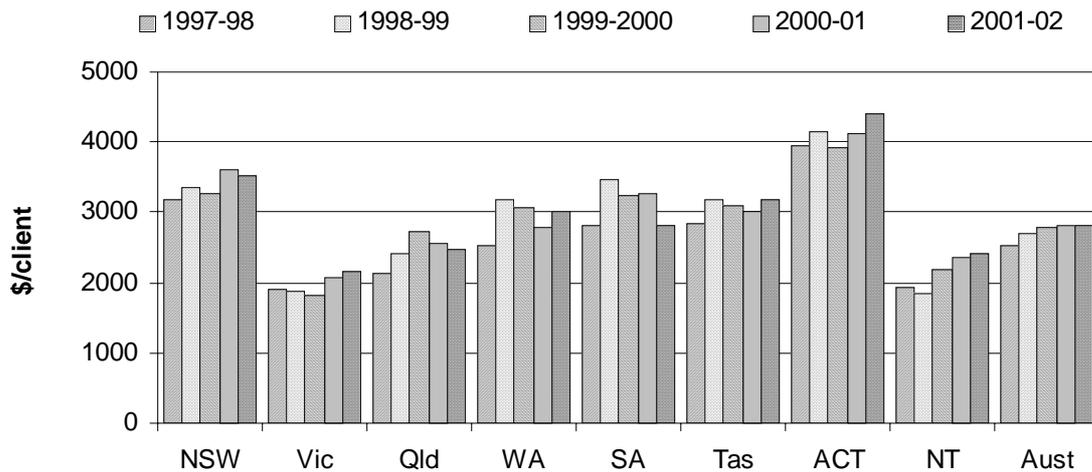


<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 15A.178 for a description of the analysis.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.178.

Nationally, the recurrent cost per client accessing SAAP services was \$2800 in 2001-02. This figure varied across jurisdictions, from \$4410 in the ACT to \$2170 in Victoria (figure 15.30).

**Figure 15.30 Real recurrent cost per client accessing services (2001-02 dollars)<sup>a</sup>**

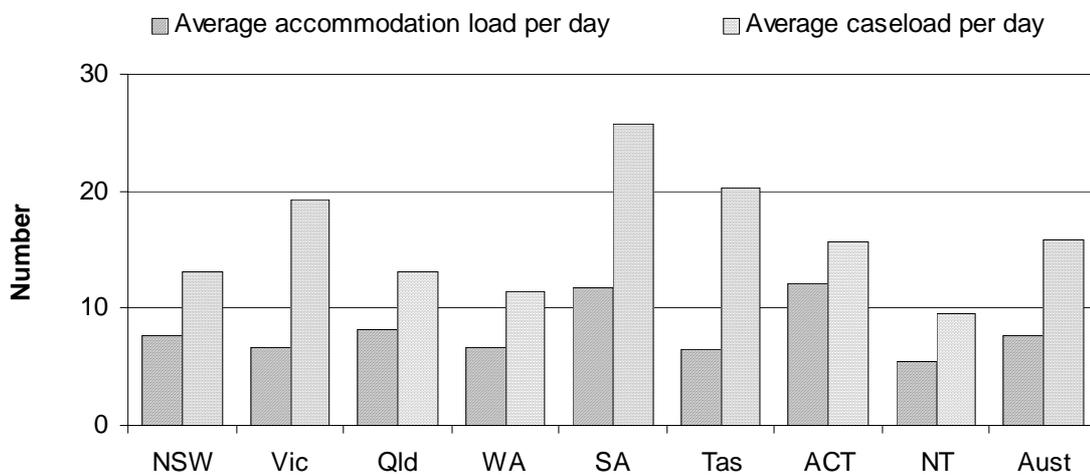


<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 15A.179 for a description of the analysis.

Source: SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); table 15A.179.

The average accommodation load is an indicator of the average number of people accommodated per day per agency. The average accommodation load in 2001-02 was 7.6 nationally. Across jurisdictions it ranged from 12.1 in the ACT to 5.4 in the NT. The average caseload is an indicator of the average number of people being supported per day per agency. The average caseload in 2001-02 was 15.8 nationally and ranged from 25.7 in SA to 9.5 in the NT (figure 15.31). Differences in the average accommodation load and caseload may reflect differences in the average size of agencies across jurisdictions.

**Figure 15.31 Average accommodation load and caseload per day, 2001-02<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> See notes to table 15A.180 for a description of how accommodation and caseload were estimated.

Source: table SAAP NDCA Administrative Data and Client Collections (unpublished); 15A.180.

## 15.10 Future directions in supported accommodation and assistance performance reporting

### Measuring client satisfaction, client outcomes and clients with high and complex needs

Client satisfaction is an important indicator of quality. Work on developing measures of client satisfaction within the SAAP population is being undertaken through a two-stage consultancy which commenced in September 2001. The consultancy has involved widespread consultations and developmental work supported by limited trials of measures that are considered to be appropriate for SAAP clients. The report on the first stage of this work was received in July 2002

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and the second stage (designed to trial the client satisfaction measures within a much larger group of agencies) is underway.

Projects on the measurement of client outcomes and on clients with high and complex needs are also underway. These projects are developing and testing client outcome measures and developing a method for collecting meaningful information on clients with high and complex needs. Both projects are expected to report in the first half of 2003.

### **Improving data and information collection**

An Information Management Plan (IMP) for SAAP IV was adopted in 2001 by the SAAP National Coordination and Development Committee. The committee has approved the guiding principles of the IMP and work is underway. The first stage of the implementation process involves defining the information needs of all stakeholders more precisely and then determining the best way in which to collect and use this information. This work is likely to lead to changes in the scope and nature of the SAAP national data collection. The movement to an information management paradigm, from one more focussed on data collection from SAAP services, will require changes at all levels and will involve progressive implementation over a number of years.

The implementation of the IMP will:

- place increased emphasis on electronic data capture;
- require increased support processes for SAAP agencies (including training, and a help line) to increase data quality and maximise use of the data.

Electronic data capture within SAAP agencies currently occurs through the use of specially developed software (SMART — SAAP Management and Reporting Tool) provided free to SAAP agencies and supported through specially developed training and documentation and the provision of a hot line. Agencies are encouraged to submit their data via SMART rather than via paper forms.

The number of SAAP agencies using SMART has steadily increased over the years. The increased take-up is probably due to the provision of additional training, increased publicity and information about the benefits of SMART, and to a broader understanding that the automatic encryption process incorporated into SMART provides significantly better security than that of paper forms. A further benefit in using SMART is that data quality is enhanced because the software's prompts and processes aid the user.

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During the implementation of the IMP process, SMART will be maintained, enhanced and supported with increased training. The progressive move to an information management paradigm within SAAP may require new data capture processes (including new software), which may eventually involve the electronic transfer of information.

## **15.11 Jurisdictions' comments**

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter. Appendix A contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. These data cover a range of demographic and geographic characteristics, including age profile, geographic distribution of the population, income levels, education levels, tenure of dwellings and cultural heritage (including Indigenous and ethnic status).

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## Commonwealth Government comments

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2001-02 was the second year of the five-year Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) Agreement between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories. This is the fourth set of SAAP Agreements (SAAP IV).

The Commonwealth is providing over \$800 million for SAAP IV. This represents an increase of over \$160 million or some 30 per cent over total Commonwealth funding for the SAAP III Agreements.

Work has progressed during the year on the implementation of an Information Management Plan for SAAP. The emphasis in the plan is on strengthening the capacity of SAAP funded agencies to collect and use information. A number of strategies have been employed to achieve this objective, including improved data training and support, improved communication (including an interactive web site) and work on streamlining the existing national data collection. A new research program was launched during the year to provide opportunities for SAAP agencies to obtain funding for local level research in collaboration with networks and research agencies or individuals. This activity will contribute to the knowledge base for SAAP and also assist agencies to build capacity. The first *SAAP National Performance Report* was published in early 2002.

The Commonwealth has a number of other programs and new initiatives, which provide valuable support to homeless people, people in crisis and those affected by domestic violence. An evaluation of the Job Placement, Employment and Training Program highlighted how it is providing positive training and employment outcomes for young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The new Personal Support Program, which is designed to give special help to people with problems such as homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, mental illness and domestic violence, was launched during the year. The program will fund 144 organisations to deliver support from 600 sites across Australia. The Reconnect Program, an early intervention program for young people at risk of homelessness and their families, was expanded during the year.

The National Homelessness Strategy is being progressed on a number of fronts. A key focus of the Strategy during 2002 has been the improvement of Centrelink service delivery to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness has revised its discussion paper *Working towards a National Homelessness Strategy* to incorporate feedback received during national consultations on the paper. In addition, innovative demonstration projects have been commissioned in a number of key priority areas. Results of the projects inform policy in areas relevant to homelessness. One of the projects funded under the National Homeless Strategy is a National Homelessness Conference to be held in April 2003.

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## **New South Wales Government comments**

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### *Child protection and out-of-home care*

Since the proclamation of the new legislation and the opening of the HelpLine there has been a substantial increase in workload and complexity of cases for the Department of Community Services (DoCS). Additional caseworkers were engaged at the HelpLine, and the 'Kibble Committee' — a joint DoCS, Central Agency and NSW PSA working party — reviewed the impact of this increase in demand for DoCS services and brought forward an interim report in June 2002. Its work on demand management is continuing.

NSW established the Aboriginal Children and Family Services State Secretariat, which is a peak group bringing together Aboriginal out-of-home care service providers to develop and manage service delivery across the State.

Leaving care and after care services were expanded to support young people in their transition to independence from out of home care.

The Shared Stories/Shared Lives Project brought Government and non-government providers together for joint training to improve foster care services.

A Children's Court Clinic was established to provide independent assessments of children, young people and their families to the Children's Court. A panel of psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers is available to undertake assessments throughout the State.

Legislation on permanency planning passed through the NSW Parliament in November 2001. The changes focus on restoration of the child/young person to their family wherever possible, and an early decision on permanent placement.

### *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)*

NSW has been pleased with its improvement in a number of the efficiency indicators in 2001-02, including its 19 per cent reduction on costs per day of support. These are positive indicators of the efforts being made in NSW by both Government and non-government stakeholders (including workers) to improve the performance of SAAP in NSW.

However, NSW was hampered in achieving maximum progress on SAAP IV reforms during the 2001-02 financial year as a result of the protracted work associated with the implementation of a new state industrial award (Social and Community Services Employees (State) Award) in November 2001, particularly the failure of the Commonwealth to pay its share of the award increase. Following the decision by the NSW Government to fund both the NSW and Commonwealth governments' share of the new award costs and protect the SAAP IV Reform funding, NSW is now able to renew its effort with the implementation of SAAP IV reforms. Progress is now well in train to expedite the implementation of area plans developed through the system's review and to bring the negotiation of new performance agreements back to the pre-award schedule.

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## Victorian Government comments

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### *Child protection and supported placements*

During 2001-02 Victoria has completed a wide-ranging examination of child protection and support services which resulted in the report *An Integrated Strategy for Child Protection and Placement Services*. The report has recommended approaches to highlight strengthened prevention and early intervention services, as well as a range of improved service responses for children and young people who are more deeply involved in the protection and placement system.

In response, a series of innovation projects have been established to provide a new and improved focus on prevention and early intervention. These include service enhancements to family support services in eight local government areas. They are specifically designed to reduce re-notifications to child protection through both provision of support and assistance to vulnerable families. Intensive therapeutic services are being established for children and young people who have been abused. Related initiatives include the implementation of the new Aboriginal Protocol and the Looking after Children framework.

Other significant initiatives, which have been successfully completed during 2001-02, include the Child Protection Client and Family Survey. This survey was designed to identify client and family experiences of child protection. It has been complemented by the audit of the provision of home-based care services. Both projects are being used to inform and improve child protection and out-of-home care services. Work has also commenced on the development of new service standards and outcome objectives for residential care and the development of a Statewide approach for pre-service training for home based carers.

### *Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP)*

Development of the Victorian Homelessness Strategy (VHS) has been completed and was released in February 2002. It was undertaken over a two-year period and involved extensive sector and consumer consultations. The final report, *Directions for Change*, provides the framework for ongoing development and enhancement of services for Victorian homeless people.

*Directions for Change* has identified 15 actions and 16 strategies that will improve the sector's capacity to respond to homelessness and are designed to help stem the flow into crisis accommodation. A key emphasis has been to build stronger collaborative partnerships between homelessness services and other areas of government, including health, education and employment.

A number of innovative cross-portfolio initiatives have already been commenced. They are focused on intervening earlier with groups who have a high propensity to remain homeless. Initiatives include targeted services for those leaving correctional and juvenile justice facilities. Other VHS funded pilots include working with public housing tenants at risk of eviction, working with older persons in tenuous private rental, and increasing housing options for women escaping domestic violence.

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## Queensland Government comments

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Queensland continued to implement responses to the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions (Forde Inquiry). The third instalment of \$10 million was applied to a range of ongoing initiatives including new service delivery positions and the strengthening of responses to former residents. Further reform continued following the proclamation of the *Child Protection Act 1999* in March 2000 and included:

- an increase in the allowance to foster carers;
- the trialling of new intake and assessment tools for responding to child protection notifications and assessing the needs of children in care;
- the licensing of care services to ensure the quality of care provided to children and young people meets legislated standards;
- the progression of the recommendations of Project Axis through cross-agency responses to child sexual abuse;
- the implementation of departmental policy and training around standard of care issues; and
- the establishment of a Child Death Review register to ensure the effective and timely identification of suitable persons to lead child death reviews and to ensure accountable and transparent review processes.

### *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)*

Reform efforts in SAAP in 2001-02 focused on enhancing the integration of SAAP services with each other and with the broader service system to improve outcomes for a diverse client group. A planning strategy was undertaken in each departmental region to reform service delivery to women and children escaping domestic and family violence, with a view to enhancing the diversity of service models and addressing inconsistent practices. Sub regional service integration strategies were completed in four regions to review the mix of service types in each location and encourage consistent assessment and case management practices and policies. A further project established links between SAAP agencies and services targeting people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and promoted the adoption of access and equity policies by SAAP services.

The Queensland Government also established forums to enhance coordination between State Government departments to improve responses to homeless people. In particular, issues related to homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the subject of a whole-of-Government strategy due to be completed in 2003.

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## Western Australian Government comments

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### *Child protection*

In 2002, the Gordon Inquiry report, *Putting the Picture Together*, reported on responses by Government agencies to complaints of family violence and child abuse in Aboriginal communities, and the Harries Report, *Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse: Evidence and Options*, reported on the merits of introducing mandatory reporting of child maltreatment in WA. The findings of these reports are being taken into account in the development of the new Department for Community Development and in building mechanisms to improve collaboration and coordination across Government and with non-government service providers in the provision of services to families and children in need.

### *Supported placements*

The department developed a strategic framework to achieve positive results for children and young people in care in partnership with the not for profit sector and the community. Development of the framework, which will guide the department in its work in this area to 2005, involved consultations with key stakeholders.

The Department for Community Development commenced working with other Government departments to develop protocols to implement an Interagency Policy for Working with Young People in State Care in recognition that across-Government strategies are required to improve outcomes for children and young people in care.

The Looking After Children case management system was implemented Statewide, which involved training for departmental staff, the not-for-profit sector and departmental foster carers. The pilot Foster Care Recruitment Service was reviewed, and its continuation was recommended and endorsed.

### *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)*

The Government established the State Homelessness Taskforce in July 2001. In May 2002, the Government responded to the State Homelessness Taskforce report with a range of initiatives and \$32 million over four years to improve services under three themes: better options for housing; vulnerability and transition; and stability in housing. An across-Government monitoring committee was established to oversee the implementation of the strategy.

Revised SAAP Service Standards were distributed to SAAP services during the year. The revised standards provide services with a guideline for best practice in SAAP. Protocols were completed with the department's service delivery offices and in relation to immigration and multicultural affairs. Work commenced on protocols with the Department of Education and the Western Australian Police Service. Implementation workshops were held in the metropolitan area with SAAP services, mental health services and community drug service teams.

Through the joint Commonwealth/State Partnerships Against Domestic Violence initiative, four new services to address family violence were established in remote Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley.

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## South Australian Government comments

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### *Child protection*

South Australia continues to receive increasing numbers of reports of suspected child abuse. Strengths in the system include the centralised intake process — increasing the consistency in intake, with the Aboriginal team providing culturally sensitive assessments — and the differential response system, which provides for both investigatory and non-investigatory responses according to the particular circumstances of the family or child. Interagency collaboration concerning children assessed to be in danger has been improved through joint training of Family and Youth Services, Police and Child Protection Services personnel. Further family intervention is offered to those families where there is an assessed likelihood of further harm to children. Renotification and resubstantiation rates are a matter of concern, however, and a Review into Child Protection legislation, policies and practices across the government and non-government sector is underway, with recommendations due to be provided to Government in December 2002.

### *Out-of-home care*

Supported placement provision in SA is designed to ensure a continuum of placement outcomes from providing primary support to families (family preservation and reunification services), to supplementing the care provided by birth families (respite and short term care provision), to providing care outside of the family for children and young people who can no longer remain with their birth family (long-term placements: foster, relative or congregate care). Implementation of the recommendations of the major Alternative Care Review is proceeding.

### *Supported Assistance and Accommodation Program*

The SA Government has a commitment to reducing homelessness, which will be actioned through the newly formed Social Inclusion Unit. This unit will work closely with the Department of Human Services at a strategic level to implement the SA Homelessness Plan, of which SAAP is an integral part. There is a continued strategic focus on vulnerable adults in the inner city, young people in rural areas, and the development of a single telephone referral and assessment point for SAAP clients. A research study exploring homelessness among Aboriginal young people has been completed and provides valuable insight into pathways to homelessness for this group. Evaluation has identified successful outcomes for three pilot early intervention projects aimed at preventing family homelessness. These will inform the development of new models of service.

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## Tasmanian Government comments

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### *Protection and support services*

Care and protection services have achieved greater integration with complementary services, with the creation of a new Children and Families Division, which brings pre and post-natal support services, child health nurses, child development units, youth health services and parenting centres under the same management structure as the statutory care and protection service. The establishment of the Our Kids Bureau aims for earlier intervention, improved integration of services and support to children from conception to 11 years. Projects that promote the strategic policy objectives of the Our Kids Bureau include the centralisation of the intake service for reports on child abuse or neglect and the establishment of a 24-hour information line for parents. The Government has also committed to a new initiative called 'Kids in Mind', to be implemented from 2003-04, that supports children of parents with mental health and/or alcohol and drug problems.

### *Out-of-home-care services*

Work commenced on the research and analysis of the cost of care and protection services. This should promote equity and transparency both in relation to reimbursement for carers and case management services.

There has also been agreement between the Commonwealth, States and Territories to develop a national foster carers plan that should identify joint work that will improve the outcomes for children in care, and also enhance the support to carers.

### *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) services*

Tasmania implemented a major reform of the SAAP service system and a number of improvements in program management. Features of the new service system include increased emphasis on early intervention and an improved match between the clients' needs and the services provided through increasing the proportion of funds allocated to flexible support services (including the establishment of a brokerage fund). Also, it includes increased emphasis on assessment, including the development and implementation of a common assessment tool, improved access to services through the redistribution of services on a population basis, the establishment of a 24-hour toll free telephone assistance service, and an enhanced range of accommodation options (including the provision of additional community tenancies).

Over the next 12 months, priority will be placed on the development of a Quality Assurance Framework and a Statewide Reporting Framework. Priority will also be placed on the redevelopment of the policy framework for the provision of services to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This will be achieved through the establishment of a round table on homelessness.

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## Australian Capital Territory Government comments

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### *Child protection and supported placements*

This year has been characterised by a period of learning and development within the organisation. Stemming from the implementation of new legislation in May 2000, a review of the *Children and Young People Act 1999* has commenced in line with section 418 of this Act. It is also timely to review and evaluate the implementation of various aspects of policy and practice that were introduced with the new legislation. The ACT is seeking to refocus service delivery to create and consolidate a service of excellence in the area of child protection. This goal is underpinned by two central concerns, a commitment to continuous learning and improvement, and supporting staff. The strategy is being driven by a commitment to improved service delivery based on best practice standards nationally and internationally.

Another important achievement for 2002 was the launch of a Foster Carer Recruitment Campaign on 30 May 2002 by Minister Corbell. Recurrent funding has been made available by the Government specifically for this purpose. As part of the campaign, a range of materials have been produced, including a television commercial, a radio commercial, an information booklet and a poster. Recruitment and retention of foster carers is crucial to the work of child protection and family support. Research also suggests that the needs of children coming into care are increasingly complex. The campaign is an excellent example of Government working in partnership with non-government foster care agencies and other key stakeholders.

The relatively high cost of SAAP in the ACT reflects a relatively low proportion of clients achieving independent living following SAAP support periods, due to: the low vacancy rate in the private rental market and availability of public housing stock, and the high percentage of SAAP clients arriving with no income. A number of projects have commenced through the year to facilitate sustainable responses to homeless including:

- The *Affordable Housing Taskforce Report*, proposes a whole of government and community response to housing affordability issues.
- A reform process of SAAP services includes the expansion of a Complex Needs project, which will focus on working with service providers to respond to risk factors experienced by Indigenous people.
- A review of the Territory's largest SAAP funded service (200 places) was completed in May 2002. The Government is working to re-develop this facility as a community housing site, with accessible support options (including SAAP services). This will improve the outcomes for residents of the service and enhance the efficiency of the overall Program.
- A *Needs Assessment of Homelessness in the ACT* was undertaken to inform future SAAP development. An ACT Homelessness Advisory Group was established in June 2002 to develop an ACT Homelessness Strategy.

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## Northern Territory Government comments

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The Family and Children's Services (FACS) Program of the Department of Health and Community Services is responsible for child protection and out-of-home care services, and the administration of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP).

### *Aboriginal and Islander Community Worker Career Pathway Strategy*

During the year, an Indigenous employment strategy was introduced to increase the number of Indigenous employees in FACS, improve their access to outcome-based training, and enhance mobility and career prospects.

Until recently, promotion prospects for indigenous staff were limited by a requirement for a degree in social work or psychology. This barrier has now been removed, and a competency-based qualifications system has been introduced for Indigenous staff.

A target of 36 per cent has been set for the FACS Indigenous workforce, in line with the proportion of children in the Territory who are Indigenous. Currently, approximately 15 per cent of FACS staff are Indigenous.

The strategy aims to enhance the career prospects of Indigenous staff by creating a career pathway that is aligned with the Australian National Training Authority's Community Services Training Package.

The first nationally accredited courses were offered on the job by the Northern Territory University and Family and Community Services. So far, 16 Aboriginal Community Workers have graduated from the Northern Territory University in Certificate IV in Community Services (Community Work).

The Minister for Health and Community Services also announced an additional \$500 000 in the 2002-03 Budget for the employment of eight new FACS staff across the NT, with half of these positions designated for Indigenous staff. This funding was allocated in recognition of the increasing demands on the FACS Program and a demonstration of the department's commitment to implementation of the strategy.

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## 15.12 Definitions

### Child protection services

Table 15.3 Terms

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Care and protection orders	<p>Legal orders or administrative/voluntary arrangements involving the community services department, issued in respect of an individual child who is deemed to be in need of care and/or protection. Community services department involvement may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• total responsibility for the welfare of the child (for example, guardianship);</li><li>• responsibility to oversee the actions of the person or authority caring for the child; and</li><li>• responsibility to provide or arrange accommodation, or to report or give consideration to the child's welfare.</li></ul> <p>The order may have been from a court, children's panel, minister of the Crown, authorised community services department officer or similar tribunal or officer.</p> <p>Care and protection orders are categorised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• finalised guardianship and finalised custody orders sought through a court;</li><li>• finalised supervision and other finalised court orders that give the department some responsibility for the child's welfare (excluding interim orders);</li><li>• interim and temporary orders (including orders that are not finalised); and</li><li>• administrative or voluntary arrangements with the community services department, for the purpose of child protection.</li></ul> <p>Children are counted only once, even if they are on more than one care and protection order.</p>
Child	A person aged 0–17 years.
Child at risk	A child for whom no abuse or neglect can be substantiated but where there are reasonable grounds to suspect the possibility of prior or future abuse or neglect, and for whom it is considered that continued departmental involvement is warranted.
Child concern reports	Reports to community services departments regarding concerns about a child, as distinct from notifications of child abuse and neglect. The distinction between the two differs across and within jurisdictions.
Indigenous person	Person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which they are associated.
Investigation	An investigation of child abuse and neglect that involves identifying harm or risk of harm to the child, determining an outcome and assessing protective needs. It includes the interviewing or sighting of the subject child where it is practicable to do so.

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**Table 15.3 (Continued)**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Investigation finalised	Where an investigation is completed and an outcome is recorded by 31 August.
Investigation not finalised	Where an investigation is commenced but an outcome is not recorded by 31 August.
Notification	Contact with an authorised department by persons or other bodies making allegations of child abuse or neglect or harm to a child.
Substantiation	Notification for which an investigation concludes that there is reasonable cause to believe that the child had been, was being, or is likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed. It does not necessarily require sufficient evidence for a successful prosecution and does not imply that treatment or case management is, or is to be, provided.

## Out-of-home care

**Table 15.4 Terms**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Child	A person aged 0–17 years.
Exited out-of-home care	Where a child does not return to care within two months.
Family based care	Home-based care (see placement types).
Family group homes	Residential child care single dwelling establishments that have as their main purpose the provision of substitute care to children. They are typically run like family homes, with a limited number of children who eat together as a family group and are cared for around-the-clock by resident substitute parents.
Foster care	Care of a child who is living apart from their natural or adoptive parents in a private household, by one or more adults who act as 'foster parents' and are paid a regular allowance for the child's support by a government authority or non-government organisation. The authorised department or non-government organisation provides continuing supervision or support while the child remains in the care of 'foster parents'.
Foster parent	Any person who is being paid a foster allowance (or such a person's spouse) by a government or non-government organisation for the care of a child (excluding children in family group homes).
Guardian	Any person who has the legal and ongoing care and responsibility for the protection of a child.
Indigenous person	Person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which they are associated. If Indigenous status is unknown, then a person is considered to be non-Indigenous.

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**Table 15.4 (Continued)**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Non-respite care	Out-of-home care for children for child protection reasons.
Other relative	Grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin, whether the relationship is half, full, step or through adoption and can be traced through or to a person whose parents were not married to each other at the time of the child's birth. This category includes members of Aboriginal communities who are accepted by that community as being related to the child.
Out-of-home care	Overnight care, including placement with relatives (other than parents) where the government makes a financial payment. Includes care of children in legal and voluntary placements (that is, children on and not on a legal order) but excludes placements made in disability services, psychiatric services, juvenile justice facilities or overnight child care services.
Placement types	Four main categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• facility-based care (placement in a residential building where the purpose is to provide placement for children and where there are paid staff, including placements in family group homes);</li><li>• home-based care (placement in the home of a carer who is reimbursed for expenses for the care of the child). The three subcategories of home-based care are foster care/community care, relative/kinship care and other;</li><li>• independent living (including private board); and</li><li>• other (including unknown).</li></ul>
Relatives/kin	Family members other than parents, or a person well known to the child and/or family (based on an existing relationship).
Respite care	Out-of-home care on a temporary basis for reasons other than child protection — for example, when parents are ill. Excludes emergency care provided to children who are removed from their homes for protective reasons.

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**Table 15.5 Descriptors**

<i>Descriptor</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Children in out-of-home care during the year	The total number of children who are in at least one out-of-home care placement at any time during the year. A child who is in more than one placement is counted only once.
Length of time in continuous out-of-home care	The length of time for which a child is in out-of-home care on a continuous basis. A return home of less than seven days is not considered to break the continuity of placement.
Safety in out-of-home care	The proportion of children in out-of-home care who are the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible is living in the household (or was a worker in a residential care facility).

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**Table 15.6 Out-of-home care effectiveness indicators**

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<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Stability of placement	<p>Number of placements for children who have exited out-of-home care and do not return within two months. Placements do not include respite or temporary placements lasting less than seven days. Placements are counted separately where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a change in the placement type — for example, from a home-based to a facility-based placement; or</li><li>• within placement type, a change in venue, or a change from one home-based placement to a different home-based placement.</li></ul> <p>A particular placement is counted only once, so a return to a previous placement is another placement.</p>

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## Supported accommodation and assistance

**Table 15.7 Terms**

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<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Accommodation	Crisis or short term accommodation, medium to long term accommodation, and other SAAP funded accommodation (which comprises accommodation at hostels, motels and hotels, accommodation in caravans, community placements and other SAAP funded arrangements).
Agency	The body or establishment with which the State or Territory government or its representative agrees to provide a SAAP service. The legal entity has to be incorporated. Funding from the State or Territory government could be allocated directly (that is, from the government department) or indirectly (that is, from the auspice of the agency). The SAAP service could be provided at the agency's location or through an outlet at a different location.
Casual client	A person who is in contact with a SAAP agency and receives one-off assistance for a period of generally not more than one hour, and who does not establish an ongoing relationship with an agency.
Client	A person who receives supported accommodation or support
Crisis or short term supported accommodation	Supported accommodation for periods of generally not more than three months (short term) and for persons needing immediate short term accommodation (crisis).
Cross-target/multiple/general services	SAAP services targeted at more than one primary client group category — for example, SAAP services for single persons regardless of their gender.
Day support	Support only on a walk-in basis — for example, an agency that provides a drop-in centre, showering facilities and a meals service at the location of the SAAP agency.

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**Table 15.7 (Continued)**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Homeless person	<p>A person who does not have access to safe, secure and adequate housing. A person is considered to not have access to such housing if the only housing to which the person has access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is damaged, or is likely to damage, the person's health; or</li> <li>• threatens the person's safety; or</li> <li>• marginalises the person through failing to provide access to adequate personal amenities or the economic and social supports that a home normally affords; or</li> <li>• places the person in circumstances that threaten or adversely affect the adequacy, safety, security and affordability of that housing; or</li> <li>• is of unsecured tenure.</li> </ul> <p>A person is also considered homeless if they are living in accommodation provided by a SAAP agency or some other form of emergency accommodation.</p>
Indigenous person	<p>Person who is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island descent, who identifies as being an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and who is accepted as such by the community with which they are associated.</p>
Medium to long term supported accommodation	<p>Supported accommodation for periods over three months. Medium term is around three to six months and long term is longer than six months.</p>
Multiple service delivery model	<p>SAAP agencies that use more than one service delivery model to provide SAAP services — for example, crisis or short term accommodation and support, as well as day support (that is, the provision of meals).</p>
Non-english speaking background services	<p>Services that are targeted at persons whose first language is not English.</p>
Non-recurrent funds	<p>SAAP funds received for non recurrent purposes, such as funds for research, a special one-off project or replacement of capital items (for example, furniture and motor vehicles).</p>
Non-saap accommodation places	<p>Accommodation places in the form of permanent beds (owned or managed by the agency) that use funds other than SAAP funds.</p>
One-off assistance	<p>Assistance provided to a person who is not a client, such as the provision of a meal, a shower, transport, money, clothing, telephone advice, information or a referral.</p>
Ongoing support period	<p>A support period for which, at the end of the reporting period, no support end-date and no after-support information are provided.</p>
Other special characteristics	<p>Primary or secondary characteristics that are not included in those of a service's primary client or group or in other categories of the secondary client group — for example, a service specifically targeted at homeless persons with a disability.</p>
Outlet	<p>A premise owned/managed/leased by an agency at which SAAP services are delivered. Excludes accommodation purchased using SAAP funds (for example, at a motel).</p>

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**Table 15.7 (Continued)**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Outreach support services	Services that exist to provide support and other related assistance specifically to homeless people. These clients may be isolated and able to receive services and support from a range of options that enhance their flexibility (for example, advocacy, life skills and counselling). Generalist support and accommodation services may also provide outreach support in the form of follow-up to clients where they are housed. In this context, support is provided 'off site'.
Providers	Agencies that supply support and accommodation services
Real expenditure	Actual expenditure adjusted for changes in prices. Adjustments are made using the GDP(E) price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.
Recurrent funding	Funding provided by the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments to cover operating costs, salaries and rent.
Referral	When a SAAP agency contacts another agency and that agency accepts the person concerned for an appointment or interview. A referral is not provided if the person is not accepted for an appointment or interview.
SAAP service	Supported accommodation, support or one-off assistance that is provided by a SAAP agency and intended to be used by homeless persons.
Service delivery model	The mode or manner in which a service is provided through an agency. The modes of service delivery could be described as crisis or short term accommodation and support; medium to long term accommodation and support; day support; outreach support; telephone information; and referral or agency support. An agency may deliver its services through one or more of these means of delivery.
Service provider	Worker or volunteer employed and/or engaged by a SAAP agency, who either directly provides a SAAP service or in some way contributes to the provision of a SAAP service. Includes persons such as administrative staff of an agency, whether paid or not paid.
Single men services	Services provided for males who present to the SAAP agency without a partner or children.
Single women services	Services provided for females who present to the SAAP agency without a partner or children.
Support	SAAP services, other than supported accommodation, that are provided to assist homeless people or persons at imminent risk of becoming homeless to achieve the maximum possible degree of self reliance and independence. Support is ongoing and provided as part of a client relationship between the SAAP agency and the homeless person.
Support period	The period that commences when a SAAP client establishes or re-establishes (after the cessation of a previous support period) an ongoing relationship with a SAAP agency. The support period ends when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support ceases because the SAAP client terminates the relationship with the SAAP agency; or</li> <li>• support ceases because the SAAP agency terminates the relationship with the SAAP client; or</li> </ul>

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**Table 15.7 (Continued)**

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no support is provided to the SAAP client for a period of three months. A support period is relevant to the provision of supported accommodation or support, not the provision of one-off assistance.</li> </ul>
Supported accommodation	Accommodation provided by a SAAP agency in conjunction with support. The accommodation component of supported accommodation is provided in the form of beds in particular locations or accommodation purchased using SAAP funds (for example, at a motel). Agencies that provide accommodation without providing support are considered to provide supported accommodation.
Telephone information and referral	Support delivered via telephone without face-to-face contact. Support provided may include information and/or referral.
Total funding	Funding for allocation to agencies (not available at the individual client group level) for training, equipment and other administration costs.
Unmet demand	A homeless person who seeks supported accommodation or support, but is not provided with that supported accommodation or support. The person may receive one-off assistance.
Women escaping domestic violence services	Services specifically designed to assist women and women accompanied by their children, who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless as a result of violence and/or abuse.
Youth/young people services	Services provided for persons who are independent, and above the school-leaving age for the State or Territory concerned, and who present to the SAAP agency unaccompanied by a parent/guardian.

**Table 15.8 Indicators**

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Accommodation load (of agencies)	The number of accommodation days divided by the number of days for which the agency is operational during the reporting period, where the number of accommodation days equals the sum of accommodation days for all clients of an agency who are supported during the reporting period. The average accommodation load is the mean value of all agencies' accommodation loads. Support periods without valid accommodation dates are assigned the inter quartile modal duration of accommodation for agencies of the same service delivery model in the same jurisdiction.
Caseload (of agencies)	The number of support days divided by the number of days for which the agency is operational during the reporting period, where the number of support days equals the sum of support days for all clients of the agency who are supported during the reporting period. The average caseload is the mean value of all agencies' caseloads. Support periods without valid support dates are assigned the inter quartile modal duration of support for agencies of the same service delivery model in the same jurisdiction.

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## 15.13 References

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